

SELECTIONS FROM
LOCKHART'S
LIFE OF SCOTT

EDITED BY
A. BARTER



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PREFACE

THE selections here given from Lockhart's "Life" have been made with the view of presenting some of the most typical scenes and incidents in the life of Sir Walter Scott and of showing him as a man rather than as a novelist. They are therefore almost exclusively personal in character. Little mention of his works has been made, and critical matter has been entirely excluded. A list of Scott's works, with dates of publication, has been added for purposes of reference.

A. B.

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LIFE OF LOCKHART

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART forms one of a long line of Scottish men who have passed from the obscurity of a country "manse" to positions of prominence and distinction. His father was minister of the parish of Cambusnethan in Lanark. Here the future biographer of Scott was born in 1794, and here he passed his childhood. At the early age of twelve he matriculated at Glasgow University, and some years afterwards, by means of a scholarship, proceeded to Oxford. In 1816 he was called to the Scottish bar, but the practice of the law was not congenial to him, and he devoted most of his time to literature. In 1817 *Blackwood's Magazine* was established, and to this Lockhart became a regular contributor. The magazine was noted for its unsparing criticism of contemporary writers, and Lockhart found in its pages ample scope for the exercise of his very considerable powers of satire. So sharp were some of his attacks that he gained among his intimates the nickname of "the scorpion." In 1818 he was introduced to Sir Walter Scott, who appears to have been greatly attracted by him. Lockhart is described as being at this time a tall, handsome, slender young man with masses of black hair, and a quick eager manner. Like Scott, he was a Tory of the Tories, and a great lover of old romances. These similar tastes in politics and

literature formed the basis of an affectionate intimacy which quickly sprang up between the two men. Lockhart became a frequent visitor at Abbotsford, and a loyal and enthusiastic admirer of its owner. In 1820 he married Scott's eldest daughter, Sophia, and from this time Chiefswood, a small house on the Abbotsford estate, formed his country home. In 1825 he left Scotland for London, having been appointed editor of Murray's *Quarterly Review* at a salary of £1000 a year. From this time onward he saw little of Scott, but the attachment between the two continued, and the death of Sir Walter in 1832 was a great blow to Lockhart.

The latter part of his life was shadowed by many trials. In 1837 his wife died, after a long and painful illness. His only surviving son (Hugh,—the "Hugh Littlejohn" of Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather," had died in 1831 at the age of twelve) was a source of great trouble and anxiety, and ended an idle and dissipated career by an early death. Lockhart grew prematurely old, his health and his sight failed him. In 1853 he retired from his position as editor of the "Quarterly," and, like Sir Walter, tried the effect of foreign travel on a shattered system. Like Sir Walter, too, he returned to England only to die. He came to Abbotsford, then occupied by his daughter and son-in-law, on whom, through the death of all Sir Walter's own more immediate descendants, the succession had devolved. On November 25th, 1854, in the room adjoining the death room of the great novelist, Lockhart died. He was buried, by his own desire, in Dryburgh Abbey, "at the feet of Sir Walter, within hearing of Tweed."

The "Life of Scott" is, undoubtedly, Lockhart's greatest literary work. Sir Leslie Stephen says: "He

had admirable materials in Scott's letters and journals, but he turned them to such account that the biography may safely be described as, next to Boswell's 'Johnson,' the best in the language;" and this has been the general judgment, both of critics and public. The "Life" was originally issued in seven volumes, six of which appeared in 1837, the seventh in 1838. The proceeds of the first edition were given towards the payment of Sir Walter's creditors.

Lockhart also wrote a "Life of Robert Burns," which attained some fame. He translated and published a collection of "Ancient Spanish Ballads," and these had a considerable influence on the writers of the time. The mass of his work, however, consisting of novels, satires, pamphlets and magazine articles, is only of moderate merit, and is now almost entirely neglected.

SELECTIONS FROM LOCKHART'S LIFE OF SCOTT

I

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

THE present age has discovered a desire, or rather a rage, for literary anecdote and private history, that may be well permitted to alarm one who has engaged in a certain degree the attention of the public. That I have had more than my own share of popularity, my contemporaries will be as ready to admit, as I am to confess that its measure has exceeded not only my hopes, but my merits, and even wishes. I may be therefore permitted, without an extraordinary degree of vanity, to take the precaution of recording a few leading circumstances (they do not merit the name of events) of a very quiet and uniform life—that, should my literary reputation survive my temporal existence, the public may know from good authority all that they are entitled to know of an individual who has contributed to their amusement.

Every Scottishman has a pedigree. It is a national prerogative, as unalienable as his pride and his poverty. My birth was neither distinguished nor sordid. According to the prejudices of my country, it was esteemed *gentle*, as I was connected, though remotely, with ancient families both by my father's and mother's side. My father's grandfather was Walter Scott, well known in Tiviotdale by the surname of *Beardie*. He was the second son of Walter Scott, first Laird of Raeburn,

who was third son of Sir William Scott, and the grandson of Walter Scott, commonly called in tradition *Auld W'att* of Harden. I am therefore lineally descended from that ancient chieftain, whose name I have made to ring in many a ditty, and from his fair dame, the Flower of Yarrow—no bad genealogy for a Border minstrel. *Beardie*, my great-grandfather aforesaid, derived his cognomen from a venerable beard, which he wore unblemished by razor or scissors, in token of his regret for the banished dynasty of Stewart. It would have been well that his zeal had stopped there. But he took arms, and intrigued in their cause, until he lost all he had in the world, and, as I have heard, run a narrow risk of being hanged, had it not been for the interference of Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth.

He left three sons. The eldest, Walter, had a family, of which any that now remain have been long settled in America:—the male heirs are long since extinct. The third was William, father of James Scott, well known in India as one of the original settlers of Prince of Wales island:—he had, besides, a numerous family both of sons and daughters, and died at Lasswade, in Mid-Lothian.

The second, Robert Scott, was my grandfather. He was originally bred to the sea; but, being shipwrecked near Dundee in his trial voyage, he took such a sincere dislike to that element, that he could not be persuaded to a second attempt. This occasioned a quarrel between him and his father, who left him to shift for himself. Robert was one of those active spirits to whom this was no misfortune. He turned Whig upon the spot, and fairly abjured his father's politics, and his learned poverty. His chief and relative, Mr. Scott of Harden, gave him a lease of the farm of Sandy-Knowe, comprehending the rocks in the centre of which Smailholm or Sandy-Knowe Tower is situated. He took for his shepherd an old man called Hogg, who willingly lent him, out of respect to his family, his whole savings, about £30, to stock the new farm. With this sum, which it seems was at the time sufficient for the purpose the master and servant set off to purchase a stock of

sheep at Whitsun-Trust, a fair held on a hill near Wooler in Northumberland. The old shepherd went carefully from drove to drove, till he found a *hirsel* likely to answer their purpose, and then returned to tell his master to come up and conclude the bargain. But what was his surprise to see him galloping a mettled hunter about the race-course, and to find he had expended the whole stock in this extraordinary purchase!—Moses's bargain of green spectacles did not strike more dismay into the Vicar of Wakefield's family, than my grandfather's rashness into the poor old shepherd. The thing, however, was irretrievable, and they returned without the sheep. In the course of a few days, however, my grandfather, who was one of the best horsemen of his time, attended John Scott of Harden's hounds on this same horse, and displayed him to such advantage that he sold him for double the original price. The farm was now stocked in earnest; and the rest of my grandfather's career was that of successful industry.

Walter Scott, my father, was born in 1729, and educated to the profession of a Writer to the Signet. He was a singular instance of a man rising to eminence in a profession for which nature had in some degree unfitted him. He had indeed a turn for labour, and a pleasure in analyzing the abstruse feudal doctrines connected with conveyancing, which would probably have rendered him unrivalled in the line of a special pleader, had there been such a profession in Scotland; but in the actual business of the profession which he embraced, in that sharp and intuitive perception which is necessary in driving bargains for himself and others, in availing himself of the wants, necessities, caprices, and follies of some, and guarding against the knavery and malice of others, Uncle Toby himself could not have conducted himself with more simplicity than my father.

His person and face were uncommonly handsome, with an expression of sweetness of temper, which was not fallacious; his manners were rather formal, but full of genuine kindness, especially when exercising the duties of hospitality. His general habits were not only temperate, but severely abstemious; but upon a festival occasion, there were few whom a moderate glass of

wine exhilarated to such a lively degree. His religion, in which he was devoutly sincere, was Calvinism of the strictest kind, and his favourite study related to church history.

In [April 1758] my father married Anne Rutherford, eldest daughter of Dr. John Rutherford, professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh.

I was born, as I believe, on the 15th August, 1771, in a house belonging to my father, at the head of the College Wynd. It was pulled down, with others, to make room for the northern front of the new College. I was an uncommonly healthy child, but had nearly died in consequence of my first nurse being ill of a consumption, a circumstance which she chose to conceal, though to do so was murder to both herself and me. She went privately to consult Dr. Black, the celebrated professor of chemistry, who put my father on his guard. The woman was dismissed, and I was consigned to a healthy peasant, who is still alive to boast of her *laddie* being what she calls *a grand gentleman*. I showed every sign of health and strength until I was about eighteen months old. One night, I have been often told, I showed great reluctance to be caught and put to bed; and after being chased about the room, was apprehended and consigned to my dormitory with some difficulty. It was the last time I was to show such personal agility. In the morning, I was discovered to be affected with the fever which often accompanies the cutting of large teeth. It held me three days. On the fourth, when they went to bathe me as usual, they discovered that I had lost the power of my right leg. My grandfather, an excellent anatomist as well as physician, the late worthy Alexander Wood, and many others of the most respectable of the faculty, were consulted. There appeared to be no dislocation or sprain; blisters and other topical remedies were applied in vain. When the efforts of regular physicians had been exhausted, without the slightest success, my anxious parents, during the course of many years, eagerly grasped at every prospect of cure which was held out by the promise of empirics, or of ancient ladies or gentlemen who conceived themselves entitled to recom-

mend various remedies, some of which were of a nature sufficiently singular. But the advice of my grandfather, Dr. Rutherford, that I should be sent to reside in the country, to give the chance of natural exertion, excited by free air and liberty, was first resorted to; and before I have the recollection of the slightest event, I was, agreeably to his friendly counsel, an inmate in the farm-house of Sandy-Knowe.

It is here at Sandy-Knowe, in the residence of my paternal grandfather, that I have the first consciousness of existence; and I recollect distinctly that my situation and appearance were a little whimsical. Among the odd remedies recurred to to aid my lameness, some one had recommended, that so often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, I should be stripped, and swathed up in the skin, warm as it was flayed from the carcase of the animal. In this Tartar-like habiliment I well remember lying upon the floor of the little parlour in the farm-house, while my grandfather, a venerable old man with white hair, used every excitement to make me try to crawl. I also distinctly remember the late Sir George MacDougal of Makerstoun, father of the present Sir Henry Hay MacDougal, joining in this kindly attempt. He was, God knows how, a relation of ours, and I still recollect him in his old-fashioned military habit (he had been colonel of the Greys), with a small cocked hat, deeply laced, an embroidered scarlet waistcoat, and a light-coloured coat, with milk-white locks tied in a military fashion, kneeling on the ground before me, and dragging his watch along the carpet to induce me to follow it. The benevolent old soldier and the infant wrapped in his sheepskin would have afforded an odd group to uninterested spectators. This must have happened about my third year, for Sir George MacDougal and my grandfather both died shortly after that period.

My grandmother continued for some years to take charge of the farm, assisted by my father's second brother, Mr. Thomas Scott. My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden. Wicht Willie of Aikwood. Jamie Telfer of the

fair Dodhead, and other heroes—merry-men all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John. A more recent hero, but not of less note, was the celebrated *Diel of Littledean*, whom she well remembered, as he had married her mother's sister. Of this extraordinary person I learned many a story, grave and gay, comic and warlike. Two or three old books which lay in the window-seat were explored for my amusement in the tedious winter-days. Automathes, and Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, were my favourites, although at a later period an odd volume of Josephus's Wars of the Jews divided my partiality.

My kind and affectionate aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose memory will ever be dear to me, used to read these works to me with admirable patience, until I could repeat long passages by heart.

I was in my fourth year when my father was advised that the Bath waters might be of some advantage to my lameness. My affectionate aunt, although such a journey promised to a person of her retired habits any thing but pleasure or amusement, undertook as readily to accompany me to the wells of Bladud, as if she had expected all the delight that ever the prospect of a watering-place held out to its most impatient visitants. My health was by this time a good deal confirmed by the country air, and the influence of that imperceptible and unfatiguing exercise to which the good sense of my grandfather had subjected me; for when the day was fine, I was usually carried out and laid down beside the old shepherd, among the crags or rocks round which he fed his sheep. The impatience of a child soon inclined me to struggle with my infirmity, and I began by degrees to stand, to walk, and to run. Although the limb affected was much shrunk and contracted, my general health, which was of more importance, was much strengthened by being frequently in the open air, and, in a word, I who in a city had probably been condemned to hopeless and helpless decrepitude, was now a healthy, high-spirited, and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child—*non sine diis animosus infans*.

We went to London by sea, and it may gratify the curiosity of minute biographers to learn. that our voyage

was performed in the Duchess of Buccleuch, Captain Beatson, master. At London we made a short stay, and saw some of the common shows exhibited to strangers. When, twenty-five years afterwards, I visited the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey, I was astonished to find how accurate my recollections of these celebrated places of visitation proved to be, and I have ever since trusted more implicitly to my juvenile reminiscences. At Bath, where I lived about a year, I went through all the usual discipline of the pump-room and baths, but I believe without the least advantage to my lameness. During my residence at Bath, I acquired the rudiments of reading at a day-school, kept by an old dame near our lodgings, and I had never a more regular teacher, although I think I did not attend her a quarter of a year. An occasional lesson from my aunt supplied the rest. Afterwards, when grown a big boy, I had a few lessons from Mr. Stalker of Edinburgh, and finally from the Rev. Mr. Cleeve. But I never acquired a just pronounciation, nor could I read with much propriety.

In other respects my residence at Bath is marked by very pleasing recollections. The venerable John Home, author of *Douglas*, was then at the watering-place, and paid much attention to my aunt and to me. His wife, who has survived him, was then an invalid, and used to take the air in her carriage on the Downs, when I was often invited to accompany her. But the most delightful recollections of Bath are dated after the arrival of my uncle, Captain Robert Scott, who introduced me to all the little amusements which suited my age, and above all, to the theatre. The play was *As You Like It*; and the witchery of the whole scene is alive in my mind at this moment. I made, I believe, noise more than enough, and remember being so much scandalized at the quarrel between Orlando and his brother in the first scene, that I screamed out, "A'n't they brothers?" A few weeks' residence at home convinced me, who had till then been an only child in the house of my grandfather, that a quarrel between brothers was a very natural event.

After being a year at Bath, I returned first to Edin-

burgh, and afterwards for a season to Sandy-Knowe;—and thus the time whiled away till about my eighth year, when it was thought sea-bathing might be of service to my lameness.

For this purpose, still under my aunt's protection, I remained some weeks at Prestonpans.

From Prestonpans I was transported back to my father's house in George's Square, which continued to be my most established place of residence, until my marriage in 1797. I felt the change from being a single indulged brat, to becoming a member of a large family, very severely; for under the gentle government of my kind grandmother, who was meekness itself, and of my aunt, who, though of an higher temper, was exceedingly attached to me, I had acquired a degree of licence which could not be permitted in a large family. I had sense enough, however, to bend my temper to my new circumstances; but such was the agony which I internally experienced, that I have guarded against nothing more in the education of my own family, than against their acquiring habits of self-willed caprice and domination. I found much consolation during this period of mortification, in the partiality of my mother. She joined to a light and happy temper of mind, a strong turn to study poetry and works of imagination. She was sincerely devout, but her religion was, as became her sex, of a cast less austere than my father's. Still, the discipline of the Presbyterian Sabbath was severely strict, and I think injudiciously so. Although Bunyan's *Pilgrim*, Gesner's *Death of Abel*, Rowe's *Letters*, and one or two other books, which, for that reason, I still have a favour for, were admitted to relieve the gloom of one dull sermon succeeding to another—there was far too much tedium annexed to the duties of the day; and in the end it did none of us any good.

My week-day tasks were more agreeable. My lameness and my solitary habits had made me a tolerable reader, and my hours of leisure were usually spent in reading aloud to my mother Pope's translation of *Homer*, which, excepting a few traditionary ballads, and the songs in Allan Ramsay's *Evergreen*, was the first poetry which I perused. My mother had good natural

taste and great feeling: she used to make me pause upon those passages which expressed generous and worthy sentiments, and if she could not divert me from those which were descriptive of battle and tumult, she contrived at least to divide my attention between them. My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and the terrible—the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day. I got by heart, not as a task, but almost without intending it, the passages with which I was most pleased, and used to recite them aloud, both when alone and to others—more willingly, however, in my hours of solitude, for I had observed some auditors smile, and I dreaded ridicule at that time of life more than I have ever done since.

In [1778] I was sent to the second class of the Grammar School, or High School of Edinburgh, then taught by Mr. Luke Fraser, a good Latin scholar and a very worthy man. Though I had received, with my brothers, in private, lessons of Latin from Mr. James French, now a minister of the Kirk of Scotland, I was nevertheless rather behind the class in which I was placed both in years and in progress. It was probably owing to this circumstance, that, although at a more advanced period of life I have enjoyed considerable facility in acquiring languages, I did not make any great figure at the High School—or, at least, any exertions which I made were desultory and little to be depended on.

I glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other, and commonly disgusted my kind master as much by negligence and frivolity, as I occasionally pleased him by flashes of intellect and talent. Among my companions, my good-nature and a flow of ready imagination rendered me very popular. Boys are uncommonly just in their feelings, and at least equally generous. My lameness, and the efforts which I made to supply that disadvantage, by making up in address what I wanted in activity, engaged the latter principle in my favour; and in the winter play hours, when hard exercise was impossible, my tales used to assemble an admiring audience round Lucky Brown's fireside, and

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y was he that could sit next to the inexhaustible
 ator. I was also, though often negligent of my
 a task, always ready to assist my friends, and hence
 had a little party of staunch partisans and adherents,
 stout of hand and heart, though somewhat dull of head
 —the very tools for raising a hero to eminence. So,
 on the whole, I made a brighter figure in the yards
 than in the class.

After having been three years under Mr. Fraser, our
 class was, in the usual routine of the school, turned
 over to Dr. Adam, the Rector. It was from this
 respectable man that I first learned the value of the
 knowledge I had hitherto considered only as a burden-
 some task. It was the fashion to remain two years
 at his class, where we read Cæsar, and Livy, and
 Sallust, in prose; Virgil, Horace, and Terence, in verse.
 I had by this time mastered, in some degree, the diffi-
 culties of the language, and began to be sensible of its
 beauties. This was really gathering grapes from
 thistles; nor shall I soon forget the swelling of my
 little pride when the Rector pronounced, that though
 many of my school-fellows understood the Latin better,
Gualterus Scott was behind few in following and enjoy-
 ing the author's meaning. Thus encouraged, I dis-
 tinguished myself by some attempts at poetical versions
 from Horace and Virgil. Dr. Adam used to invite his
 scholars to such essays, but never made them tasks.
 I gained some distinction upon these occasions, and the
 Rector in future took much notice of me; and his
 judicious mixture of censure and praise went far to
 counterbalance my habits of indolence and inattention.
 I saw I was expected to do well, and I was piqued in
 honour to vindicate my master's favourable opinion.
 I climbed, therefore, to the first form; and, though I
 never made a first rate Latinist, my school-fellows, and
 what was of more consequence, I myself, considered
 that I had a character for learning to maintain.

In the mean while my acquaintance with English
 literature was gradually extending itself. In the inter-
 vals of my school hours I had always perused with
 avidity such books of history or poetry or voyages and
 travels as chance presented to me—not forgetting the

usual, or rather ten times the usual, quantity of fairy tales, eastern stories, romances, etc. These studies were totally unregulated and undirected. My tutor thought it almost a sin to open a profane play or poem; and my mother, besides that she might be in some degree trammelled by the religious scruples which he suggested, had no longer the opportunity to hear me read poetry as formerly. I found, however, in her dressing-room (where I slept at one time) some odd volumes of Shakspeare, nor can I easily forget the rapture with which I sate up in my shirt reading them by the light of a fire in her apartment, until the bustle of the family rising from supper warned me it was time to creep back to my bed, where I was supposed to have been safely deposited since nine o'clock. Chance, however, threw in my way a poetical preceptor. This was no other than the excellent and benevolent Dr. Blacklock, well known at that time as a literary character. I know not how I attracted his attention, and that of some of the young men who boarded in his family; but so it was that I became a frequent and favoured guest. The kind old man opened to me the stores of his library, and through his recommendation I became intimate with Ossian and Spenser. I was delighted with both, yet I think chiefly with the latter poet. The tawdry repetitions of the Ossianic phraseology disgusted me rather sooner than might have been expected from my age. But Spenser I could have read for ever. Too young to trouble myself about the allegory, I considered all the knights and ladies and dragons and giants in their outward and exoteric sense, and God only knows how delighted I was to find myself in such society. As I had always a wonderful facility in retaining in my memory whatever verses pleased me, the quantity of Spenser's stanzas which I could repeat was really marvellous. But this memory of mine was a very fickle ally, and has through my whole life acted merely upon its own capricious motion, and might have enabled me to adopt old Beattie of Meikledale's answer, when complimented by a certain reverend divine on the strength of the same faculty:—"No, sir," answered the old Borderer, "I have no command of my memory. It only

retains what hits my fancy, and probably, sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I would not be able when you finished to remember a word you had been saying." My memory was precisely of the same kind: it seldom failed to preserve most tenaciously a favourite passage of poetry, a play-house ditty, or, above all, a Border-raid ballad; but names, dates, and the other technicalities of history, escaped me in a most melancholy degree. The philosophy of history, a much more important subject, was also a sealed book at this period of my life; but I gradually assembled much of what was striking and picturesque in historical narrative; and when, in riper years, I attended more to the deduction of general principles, I was furnished with a powerful host of examples in illustration of them. I was, in short, like an ignorant gamester, who kept up a good hand until he knew how to play it.

I left the High School, therefore, with a great quantity of general information, ill arranged, indeed, and collected without system, yet deeply impressed upon my mind; readily assorted by my power of connexion and memory, and gilded, if I may be permitted to say so, by a vivid and active imagination. If my studies were not under any direction at Edinburgh, in the country, it may be well imagined, they were less so. A respectable subscription library, a circulating library of ancient standing, and some private book-shelves, were open to my random perusal, and I waded into the stream like a blind man into a ford, without the power of searching my way, unless by groping for it. My appetite for books was as ample and indiscriminating as it was indefatigable, and I since have had too frequently reason to repent that few ever read so much, and to so little purpose.

Among the valuable acquisitions I made about this time, was an acquaintance with Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, through the flat medium of Mr. Hoole's translation. But above all, I then first became acquainted with Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*. As I had been from infancy devoted to legendary lore of this nature, and only reluctantly withdrew my attention, from the scarcity of materials and the

rudeness of those which I possessed, it may be imagined, but cannot be described, with what delight I saw pieces of the same kind which had amused my childhood, and still continued in secret the Delilahs of my imagination, considered as the subject of sober research, grave commentary, and apt illustration, by an editor who showed his poetical genius was capable of emulating the best qualities of what his pious labour preserved. I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbour in the *garden* I have mentioned. The summer-day sped onward so fast, that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and to remember was in this instance the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm. About this period also I became acquainted with the works of Richardson, and those of Mackenzie—(whom in later years I became entitled to call my friend)—with Fielding, Smollet, and some others of our best novelists.

To this period also I can trace distinctly the awaking of that delightful feeling for the beauties of natural objects which has never since deserted me. The neighbourhood of Kelso, the most beautiful, if not the most romantic village in Scotland, is eminently calculated to awaken these ideas. It presents objects, not only grand in themselves, but venerable from their association. The meeting of two superb rivers, the Tweed and the Teviot, both renowned in song—the ruins of an ancient Abbey—the more distant vestiges of Roxburgh Castle—the modern mansion of Fleurs, which is so situated as to combine the ideas of ancient baronial grandeur with those of modern taste—are in themselves objects of the first class; yet are so mixed, united, and melted among

a thousand other beauties of a less prominent description, that they harmonize into one general picture, and please rather by unison than by concord. I believe I have written unintelligibly upon this subject, but it is fitter for the pencil than the pen. The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind, naturally rested upon and associated themselves with these grand features of the landscape around me; and the historical incidents, or traditional legends connected with many of them, gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if circumstances had permitted, I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe.

I was recalled to Edinburgh about the time when the College meets, and put at once to the Humanity class, under Mr. Hill, and the first Greek class, taught by Mr. Dalzell. The former held the reins of discipline very loosely, and though beloved by his students, for he was a good-natured man as well as a good scholar, he had not the art of exciting our attention as well as liking. This was a dangerous character with whom to trust one who relished labour as little as I did, and amid the riot of his class I speedily lost much of what I had learned under Adam and Whale. At the Greek class, I might have made a better figure, for Professor Dalzell maintained a great deal of authority, and was not only himself an admirable scholar, but was always deeply interested in the progress of his students. But here lay the villany. Almost all my companions who left the High School at the same time with myself, had acquired a smattering of Greek before they came to College. I, alas! had none; and finding myself far inferior to all my fellow-students, I could hit upon no better mode of vindicating my equality than by professing my contempt for the language, and my resolution not to learn it.

I imagine my father's reason for sending me to so few classes in the College, was a desire that I should

apply myself particularly to my legal studies. He had not determined whether I should fill the situation of an Advocate or a Writer; but judiciously considering the technical knowledge of the latter to be useful at least, if not essential, to a barrister, he resolved I should serve the ordinary apprenticeship of five years to his own profession. I accordingly entered into indentures with my father about 1785-6, and entered upon the dry and barren wilderness of forms and conveyances.

I cannot reproach myself with being entirely an idle apprentice—far less, as the reader might reasonably have expected,

“A clerk foredoom’d my father’s soul to cross.”

The drudgery, indeed, of the office I disliked, and the confinement I altogether detested; but I loved my father, and I felt the rational pride and pleasure of rendering myself useful to him. I was ambitious also; and among my companions in labour, the only way to gratify ambition was to labour hard and well. Other circumstances reconciled me in some measure to the confinement. The allowance for copy-money furnished a little fund for the *menus plaisirs* of the circulating library and the Theatre; and this was no trifling incentive to labour. When actually at the oar, no man could pull it harder than I, and I remember writing upwards of 120 folio pages with no interval either for food or rest. Again, the hours of attendance on the office were lightened by the power of choosing my own books, and reading them in my own way, which often consisted in beginning at the middle or the end of a volume. A deceased friend, who was a fellow-apprentice with me, used often to express his surprise that, after such a hop-step-and-jump perusal, I knew as much of the book as he had been able to acquire from reading it in the usual manner. My desk usually contained a store of most miscellaneous volumes, especially works of fiction of every kind, which were my supreme delight. I might except novels, unless those of the better and higher class; for though I read many of them, yet it was with more selection than might have been expected. The whole Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy tribe I abhorred, and

it required the art of Burney, or the feeling of Mackenzie, to fix my attention upon a domestic tale. But all that was adventurous and romantic I devoured without much discrimination, and I really believe I have read as much nonsense of this class as any man now living. Everything which touched on knight-errantry was particularly acceptable to me, and I soon attempted to imitate what I so greatly admired. My efforts, however, were in the manner of the tale-teller, not of the bard.

My greatest intimate, from the days of my school-tide, was Mr. John Irving, now a Writer to the Signet. We lived near each other, and by joint agreement were wont, each of us, to compose a romance for the other's amusement. These legends in which the martial and the miraculous always predominated, we rehearsed to each other during our walks, which were usually directed to the most solitary spots about Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags. We naturally sought seclusion, for we were conscious no small degree of ridicule would have attended our amusement, if the nature of it had become known. Whole holidays were spent in this singular pastime, which continued for two or three years, and had, I believe, no small effect in directing the turn of my imagination to the chivalrous and romantic in poetry and prose.

In other points, however, I began to make some amends for the irregularity of my education. It is well known that in Edinburgh one great spur to emulation among youthful students is in those associations called *literary societies*, formed not only for the purpose of debate, but of composition. These undoubtedly have some disadvantages, where a bold, petulant, and disputatious temper, happens to be combined with considerable information and talent. Still, however, in order to such a person being actually spoiled by his mixing in such debates, his talents must be of a very rare nature, or his effrontery must be proof to every species of assault; for there is generally, in a well-selected society of this nature, talent sufficient to meet the forwardest, and satire enough to penetrate the most undaunted. I am particularly obliged to this sort of

club for introducing me about my seventeenth year into the society which at one time I had entirely dropped. Now, however, about 1788, I began to feel and take my ground in society. A ready wit, a good deal of enthusiasm, and a perception that soon ripened into tact and observation of character, rendered me an acceptable companion to many young men whose acquisitions in philosophy and science were infinitely superior to any thing I could boast.

Amidst these studies, and in this society, the time of my apprenticeship elapsed; and in 1790, or thereabouts, it became necessary that I should seriously consider to which department of the law I was to attach myself. My father behaved with the most parental kindness. He offered, if I preferred his own profession, immediately to take me into partnership with him, which, though his business was much diminished, still afforded me an immediate prospect of a handsome independence. But he did not disguise his wish that I should relinquish this situation to my younger brother, and embrace the more ambitious profession of the bar. I had little hesitation in making my choice—for I was never very fond of money; and in no other particular do the professions admit of a comparison. Besides, I knew and felt the inconveniences attached to that of a writer; and I thought (like a young man) many of them were "*ingenio non subeunda meo.*" The appearance of personal dependence which that profession requires was disagreeable to me; the sort of connexion between the client and the attorney seemed to render the latter more subservient than was quite agreeable to my nature; and, besides, I had seen many sad examples, while overlooking my father's business, that the utmost exertions, and the best meant services, do not secure the *man of business*, as he is called, from great loss, and most ungracious treatment on the part of his employers. The bar, though I was conscious of my deficiencies as a public speaker, was the line of ambition and liberty; it was that also for which most of my contemporary friends were destined. And, lastly, although I would willingly have relieved my father of the labours of his business, yet I saw plainly we could not have agreed on some

particulars if we had attempted to conduct it together, and that I should disappoint his expectations if I did not turn to the bar. So to that object my studies were directed with great ardour and perseverance during the years 1789, 1790, 1791, 1792.

Under these auspices, I commenced my legal studies. A little parlour was assigned me in my father's house, which was spacious and convenient, and I took the exclusive possession of my new realms with all the feelings of novelty and liberty. Let me do justice to the only years of my life in which I applied to learning with stern, steady, and undeviating industry. The rule of my friend Clerk and myself was, that we should mutually qualify ourselves for undergoing an examination upon certain points of law every morning in the week, Sundays excepted. This was at first to have taken place alternately at each other's houses, but we soon discovered that my friend's resolution was inadequate to severing him from his couch at the early hour fixed for this exercitation. Accordingly, I agreed to go every morning to his house, which, being at the extremity of Prince's Street, New Town, was a walk of two miles. With great punctuality, however, I beat him up to his task every morning before seven o'clock, and in the course of two summers, we went, by way of question and answer, through the whole of Heineccius's Analysis of the Institutes and Pandects, as well as through the smaller copy of Erskine's Institutes of the Law of Scotland. This course of study enabled us to pass with credit the usual trials, which, by the regulations of the Faculty of Advocates, must be undergone by every candidate for admission into their body. My friend William Clerk and I passed these ordeals on the same days—namely, the Civil Law trial on the [30th June, 1791], and the Scots Law trial on the [6th July, 1792]. On the [11th July, 1792], we both assumed the gown with all its duties and honours.

My progress in life during these two or three years had been gradually enlarging my acquaintance, and facilitating my entrance into good company. My father and mother, already advanced in life, saw little society at home, excepting that of near relations, or upon par-

ticular occasions, so that I was left to form connexions in a great measure for myself. It is not difficult for a youth with a real desire to please and be pleased, to make his way into good society in Edinburgh—or indeed anywhere; and my family connexions, if they did not greatly further, had nothing to embarrass my progress. I was a gentleman, and so welcome anywhere, if so be I could behave myself, as Tony Lumpkin says, “in a concatenation accordingly.”

* * * * *

II

MARRIAGE AND LIFE AT LASSWADE

1797-1804

[Scott's Autobiography ends with the extract just given. Lockhart's *Life* begins with a supplementary account of Scott's early years: this is here passed over, and the story is taken up at a point five years later than where Scott left it. In the meantime he had been practising at the Bar of the Court of Session in Edinburgh.]

His friend, Charles Kerr of Abbotrule, had been residing a good deal about this time in Cumberland: indeed, he was so enraptured with the scenery of the lakes, as to take a house in Keswick with the intention of spending half of all future years there. His letters to Scott (March, April, 1797) abound in expressions of wonder that he should continue to devote so much of his vacations to the Highlands of Scotland, “with every crag and precipice of which,” says he, “I should imagine you would be familiar by this time; nay, that the goats themselves might almost claim you for an acquaintance;” while another district lay so near him, at least as well qualified “to give a swell to the fancy.”

After the rising of the Court of Session in July [1797],

Scott set out on a tour to the English lakes, accompanied by his brother John, and Adam Fergusson.

Riding one day with Fergusson, they met, some miles from Gilsland, a young lady taking the air on horseback, whom neither of them had previously remarked, and whose appearance instantly struck both so much, that they kept her in view until they had satisfied themselves that she also was one of the party at Gilsland. The same evening there was a ball, at which Captain Scott produced himself in his regimentals, and Fergusson also thought proper to be equipped in the uniform of the Edinburgh Volunteers. There was no little rivalry among the young travellers as to who should first get presented to the unknown beauty of the morning's ride; but though both the gentlemen in scarlet had the advantage of being dancing partners, their friend succeeded in handing the fair stranger to supper—and such was his first introduction to Charlotte Margaret Carpenter.

Without the features of a regular beauty, she was rich in personal attractions; "a form that was fashioned as light as a fay's;" a complexion of the clearest and lightest olive; eyes large, deep-set and dazzling, of the finest Italian brown; and a profusion of silken tresses, black as the raven's wing; her address hovering between the reserve of a pretty young Englishwoman who has not mingled largely in general society, and a certain natural archness and gaiety that suited well with the accompaniment of a French accent. A lovelier vision, as all who remember her in the bloom of her days have assured me, could hardly have been imagined; and from that hour the fate of the young poet was fixed.

She was the daughter of Jean Charpentier, of Lyons, a devoted royalist, who held an office under Government, and Charlotte Volere, his wife. She and her only brother, Charles Charpentier, had been educated in the Protestant religion of their mother; and when their father died, which occurred in the beginning of the Revolution, Madame Charpentier made her escape with her children, first to Paris, and then to England, where they found a warm friend and protector in the late Marquis of Downshire, who had, in the course of his travels in France, formed an intimate acquaintance with

the family, and, indeed, spent some time under their roof. M. Charpentier had, in his first alarm as to the coming Revolution, invested £4000 in English securities—part in a mortgage upon Lord Downshire's estates. On the mother's death, which occurred soon after her arrival in London, this nobleman took on himself the character of sole guardian to her children; and Charles Charpentier received in due time, through his interest, an appointment in the service of the East-India Company, in which he had by this time risen to the lucrative situation of commercial resident at Salem. His sister was now making a little excursion, under the care of the lady who had superintended her education, Miss Jane Nicolson, a daughter of Dr. Nicholson, Dean of Exeter, and grand-daughter of William Nicholson, Bishop of Carlisle, well known as the editor of "The English Historical Library." To some connexions which the learned prelate's family had ever since his time kept up in the diocese of Carlisle, Miss Carpenter owed the direction of her summer tour.

[On the 24th of December of this same year, 1797, Scott was married to Miss Carpenter at St. Mary's Church, Carlisle.]

Scott carried his bride to a lodging in George Street, Edinburgh; a house which he had taken in South Castle Street not being quite prepared for her reception. The first fortnight, to which she had looked with such anxiety, was, I believe, more than sufficient to convince her husband's family that, however rashly he had formed the connexion, she had the sterling qualities of a good wife. Notwithstanding the little leaning to the pomps and vanities of the world, which her letters have not concealed, she had made up her mind to find her happiness in better things; and so long as their circumstances continued narrow, no woman could have conformed herself to them with more of good feeling and good sense. Some habits, new in the quiet domestic circles of Edinburgh citizens, did not escape criticism; and in particular, I have heard herself, in her most prosperous days, laugh heartily at the remonstrances of her George Street landlady, when it was discovered that the *southron* lodger chose to sit usually, and not on high occasions

merely, in her drawing-room,—on which subject the mother-in-law was disposed to take the thrifty old-fashioned dame's side.

In the summer of 1798 Scott had hired a pretty cottage at Lasswade, on the Esk, about six miles from Edinburgh. It was here, that when his warm heart was beating with young and happy love, and his whole mind and spirit were nerved by new motives for exertion—it was here, that in the ripened glow of manhood he seems to have first felt something of his real strength, and poured himself out in those splendid original ballads which were at once to fix his name.

Shortly after the commencement of the Winter Session [1799], the office of Sheriff-depute of Selkirkshire became vacant by the death of an early ally of Scott's, Andrew Plummer of Middlestead, a scholar and antiquary, who had entered with zeal into his ballad researches, and whose name occurs accordingly more than once in the notes to the *Border Minstrelsy*. Perhaps the community of their tastes may have had some part in suggesting to the Duke of Buccleuch, that Scott might fitly succeed Mr. Plummer in the magistrature.

His appointment to the *Sheriffship* bears date 16th December, 1799. It secured him an annual salary of £300; an addition to his resources which at once relieved his mind from whatever degree of anxiety he might have felt in considering the prospect of an increasing family, along with the ever precarious chances of a profession, in the daily drudgery of which it is impossible to suppose that he ever could have found much pleasure. The duties of the office were far from heavy; the district, small, peaceful, and pastoral, was in great part the property of the Duke of Buccleuch; and he turned with redoubled zeal to his project of editing the ballads, many of the best of which belonged to this very district of his favourite Border—those “tales,” which, as the *Dedication* of the *Minstrelsy* expresses it, had “in elder times celebrated the prowess and cheered the halls” of his noble patron's ancestors.

During the years 1800 and 1801, the *Minstrelsy* formed its editor's chief occupation—a labour of love truly, if ever such there was: but neither this nor his *sheriffship*

interfered with his regular attendance at the Bar, the abandonment of which was all this while as far as it ever had been from his imagination, or that of any of his friends. He continued to have his summer headquarters at Lasswade; and Mr. (now Sir John) Stoddart, who visited him there in the course of his Scottish tour, dwells on "the simple unostentatious elegance of the cottage, and the domestic picture which he there contemplated—a man of native kindness and cultivated talent, passing the intervals of a learned profession amidst scenes highly favourable to his poetic inspirations, not in churlish and rustic solitude, but in the daily exercise of the most precious sympathies as a husband, a father, and a friend." His means of hospitality were now much enlarged, and the cottage, on a Saturday and Sunday at least, was seldom without visitors.

III

REMOVAL TO ASHESTIEL

CONNEXION WITH JAMES BALLANTYNE

ASHESTIEL will be visited by many for Scott's sake, as long as Waverley and Marmion are remembered. A more beautiful situation for the residence of a poet could not be conceived. The house was then a small one, but, compared with the cottage at Lasswade, its accommodations were amply sufficient. You approached it through an old-fashioned garden, with holly hedges, and broad, green, terrace walks. On one side, close under the windows, is a deep ravine, clothed with venerable trees, down which a mountain rivulet is heard, more than seen, in its progress to the Tweed. The river itself is separated from the high bank on which the house stands only by a narrow meadow of the richest verdure. Opposite, and all around, are the green hills. The valley there is narrow, and the aspect in every direction is that of perfect pastoral repose. The heights immediately be-

hind are those which divide the Tweed from the Yarrow; and the latter celebrated stream lies within an easy ride, in the course of which the traveller passes through a variety of the finest mountain scenery in the south of Scotland. No town is within seven miles but Selkirk, which was then still smaller and quieter than it is now; there was hardly even a gentleman's family within visiting distance, except at Yair, a few miles lower on the Tweed, the ancient seat of the Pringles of Whytbank, and at Bowhill, between the Yarrow and Ettrick, where the Earl of Dalkeith used occasionally to inhabit a small shooting-lodge, which has since grown into a magnificent ducal residence. The country all around, with here and there an insignificant exception, belongs to the Buccleuch estate; so that, whichever way he chose to turn, the bard of the clan had ample room and verge enough, and all appliances to boot, for every variety of field sport that might happen to please his fancy; and being then in the prime vigour of manhood, he was not slow to profit by these advantages. Meantime, the concerns of his own little farm, and the care of his absent relation's woods, gave him healthful occupation in the intervals of the chase; and he had long, solitary evenings for the uninterrupted exercise of his pen; perhaps, on the whole, better opportunities of study than he had ever enjoyed before, or was to meet with elsewhere in later days.

Scott had hardly been a week in possession of his new domains, before he made acquaintance with honest Thomas Purdie, his faithful servant—his affectionately devoted humble friend from this time until death parted them. Tom was first brought before him, in his capacity of Sheriff, on a charge of poaching, when the poor fellow gave such a touching account of his circumstances,—a wife, and I know not how many children, depending on his exertions—work scarce and grouse abundant,—and all this with a mixture of odd sly humour,—that the Sheriff's heart was moved. Tom escaped the penalty of the law—was taken into employment as shepherd, and showed such zeal, activity, and shrewdness in that capacity, that Scott never had any occasion to repent of the step he soon afterwards took,

in promoting him to the position which had been originally offered to James Hogg.

In the first week of January, 1805, "The Lay" was published; and its success at once decided that literature should form the main business of Scott's life.

Mr. Ballantyne, in his Memorandum, says, that very shortly after the publication of the Lay, he found himself obliged to apply to Mr. Scott for an advance of money; his own capital being inadequate for the business which had been accumulated on his press, in consequence of the reputation it had acquired for beauty and correctness of execution. Already, as we have seen, Ballantyne had received "a liberal loan;"—"and now," says he, "being compelled, maugre all delicacy, to renew my application, he candidly answered that he was not quite sure that it would be prudent for him to comply, but in order to evince his entire confidence in me, he was willing to make a suitable advance to be admitted as a third-sharer of my business." In truth, Scott now embarked in Ballantyne's concern almost the whole of the capital which he had a few months before designed to invest in the purchase of Broadmeadows.

Before he formed his contract with Ballantyne, he was in possession of such a fixed income as might have satisfied all his desires, had he not found his family increasing rapidly about him. Even as that was, with nearly if not quite £1000 per annum, he might perhaps have retired not only from the Bar, but from Edinburgh, and settled entirely at Ashestiel or Broadmeadows, without encountering what any man of his station and habits ought to have considered as an imprudent risk. He had, however, no wish to cut himself off from the busy and intelligent society to which he had been hitherto accustomed; and resolved not to leave the Bar until he should have at least used his best efforts for obtaining, in addition to his Shrievalty, one of those Clerkships of the Supreme Court at Edinburgh, which are usually considered as honourable retirements for advocates who, at a certain standing, finally give up all hopes of reaching the dignity of the Bench. "I determined," he says, "that literature should be my staff but not my crutch, and that the profits of my literary labour, however con-

venient otherwise, should not, if I could help it, become necessary to my ordinary expenses. Upon such a post an author might hope to retreat, without any perceptible alteration of circumstances, whenever the time should arrive that the public grew weary of his endeavours to please, or he himself should tire of the pen. I possessed so many friends capable of assisting me in this object of ambition, that I could hardly overrate my own prospects of obtaining the preferment to which I limited my wishes; and, in fact, I obtained, in no long period, the reversion of a situation which completely met them."

Ashestiel, in place of being less resorted to by literary strangers than Lasswade cottage had been, shared abundantly in the fresh attractions of the Lay, and "booksellers in the plural number" were preceded and followed by an endless variety of enthusiastic "gentil bachelors," whose main temptation from the south had been the hope of seeing the Borders in company with their Minstrel. He still writes of himself as "idling away his hours;" he had already learned to appear as if he were doing so to all who had no particular right to confidence respecting the details of his privacy.

But the most agreeable of all his visitants were his own old familiar friends, and one of these [James Skene] has furnished me with a sketch of the autumn life of Ashestiel, of which I shall now avail myself.

Mr. Skene soon discovered an important change which had recently been made in his friend's distribution of his time. Previously it had been his custom, whenever professional business or social engagements occupied the middle part of his day, to seize some hours for study after he was supposed to have retired to bed. His physician suggested that this was very likely to aggravate his nervous headaches, the only malady he was subject to in the prime of his manhood; and, contemplating with steady eye a course not only of unremitting but of increasing industry, he resolved to reverse his plan, and carried his purpose into execution with unflinching energy. In short, he had now adopted the habits in which, with very slender variation, he ever after persevered when in the country. He rose by five o'clock, lit his own fire when the season required one,

and shaved and dressed with great deliberation—for he was a very martinet as to all but the mere coxcomberies of the toilet, not abhorring effeminate dandyism itself so cordially as the slightest approach to personal slovenliness, or even those “bed-gown and slipper tricks,” as he called them, in which literary men are so apt to indulge. Arrayed in his shooting-jacket, or whatever dress he meant to use till dinner time, he was seated at his desk by six o’clock, all his papers arranged before him in the most accurate order, and his books of reference marshalled around him on the floor, while at least one favourite dog lay watching his eye, just beyond the line of circumvallation. Thus, by the time the family assembled for breakfast between nine and ten, he had done enough (in his own language) “*to break the neck of the day’s work*.” After breakfast, a couple of hours more were given to his solitary tasks, and by noon he was, as he used to say, “his own man.” When the weather was bad, he would labour incessantly all the morning; but the general rule was to be out and on horseback by one o’clock at the latest; while, if any more distant excursion had been proposed over night, he was ready to start on it by ten; his occasional rainy days of unintermitted study forming, as he said, a fund in his favour, out of which he was entitled to draw for accommodation whenever the sun shone with special brightness.

IV

APPOINTMENT AS CLERK OF SESSION

LIFE AT ASHESTIEL

1805-1809

WHILE the first volumes of his Dryden were passing through the press, the affair concerning the Clerkship of the Court of Session, opened nine or ten months before, had not been neglected by the friends on whose counsel and assistance Scott had relied.

George Home of Wedderburn, in Berwickshire, a gentleman of considerable literary acquirements, and an old friend of Scott's family, had now served as Clerk of Session for upwards of thirty years. In those days there was no system of retiring pensions for the worn-out functionary of this class, and the usual method was, either that he should resign in favour of a successor who advanced a sum of money according to the circumstances of his age and health, or for a coadjutor to be associated with him in his patent, who undertook the duty on condition of a division of salary. Scott offered to relieve Mr. Home of all the labours of his office, and to allow him, nevertheless, to retain its emoluments entire during his lifetime; and the aged clerk of course joined his exertions to procure a conjoint-patent on these very advantageous terms.

When the Court opened after the spring recess, Scott entered upon his new duties as one of the Principal Clerks of Session.

Henceforth, then, when in Edinburgh, his literary work was performed chiefly before breakfast; with the assistance of such evening hours as he could contrive to rescue from the consideration of Court papers, and from those social engagements in which, year after year, as his celebrity advanced, he was of necessity more and more largely involved; and of those entire days during which the Court of Session did not sit—days which, by most of those holding the same official station, were given to relaxation and amusement. So long as he continued quarter-master of the Volunteer Cavalry, of course he had, even while in Edinburgh, some occasional horse exercise; but, in general, his town life henceforth was in that respect as inactive as his country life ever was the reverse. He scorned for a long while to attach any consequence to this complete alternation of habits; but we shall find him confessing in the sequel, that it proved highly injurious to his bodily health.

I ought to say a few words on Scott's method of treating his children in their early days. He had now two boys and two girls;—and he never had more. He was not one of those who take much delight in a mere infant; but no father ever devoted more time and tenderness

care to his offspring than he did to each of his, as they successively reached the age when they could listen to him, and understand his talk. Like their mute playmates, Camp and the greyhounds, they had at all times free access to his study; he never considered their tattle as any disturbance; they went and came as pleased their fancy; he was always ready to answer their questions; and when they, unconscious how he was engaged, entreated him to lay down his pen and tell them a story, he would take them on his knee, repeat a ballad or a legend, kiss them, and set them down again to their marbles or ninepins, and resume his labour as if refreshed by the interruption. From a very early age he made them dine at table, and "to sit up to supper" was the great reward when they had been "very good bairns." In short, he considered it as the highest duty as well as the sweetest pleasure of a parent to be the companion of his children; he partook all their little joys and sorrows, and made his kind informal instructions to blend so easily and playfully with the current of their own sayings and doings, that so far from regarding him with any distant awe, it was never thought that any sport or diversion could go on in the right way, unless *papa* were of the party, or that the rainiest day could be dull, so he were at home.

Of the irregularity of his own education he speaks with considerable regret, in the autobiographical fragment written this year at Ashestiel; yet his practice does not look as if that feeling had been strongly rooted in his mind;—for he never did show much concern about regulating systematically what is usually called *education* in the case of his own children. It seemed, on the contrary, as if he attached little importance to anything else, so he could perceive that the young curiosity was excited—the intellect, by whatever springs of interest, set in motion. He detested and despised the whole generation of modern children's books, in which the attempt is made to convey accurate notions of scientific minutiae: delighting cordially, on the other hand, in those of the preceding age, which, addressing themselves chiefly to the imagination, obtain through it, as he believed, the best chance of stirring our graver facul-

George Home of Wedderburn, in Berwickshire, a gentleman of considerable literary acquirements, and an old friend of Scott's family, had now served as Clerk of Session for upwards of thirty years. In those days there was no system of retiring pensions for the worn-out functionary of this class, and the usual method was, either that he should resign in favour of a successor who advanced a sum of money according to the circumstances of his age and health, or for a coadjutor to be associated with him in his patent, who undertook the duty on condition of a division of salary. Scott offered to relieve Mr. Home of all the labours of his office, and to allow him, nevertheless, to retain its emoluments entire during his lifetime; and the aged clerk of course joined his exertions to procure a conjoint-patent on these very advantageous terms.

When the Court opened after the spring recess, Scott entered upon his new duties as one of the Principal Clerks of Session.

Henceforth, then, when in Edinburgh, his literary work was performed chiefly before breakfast; with the assistance of such evening hours as he could contrive to rescue from the consideration of Court papers, and from those social engagements in which, year after year, as his celebrity advanced, he was of necessity more and more largely involved; and of those entire days during which the Court of Session did not sit—days which, by most of those holding the same official station, were given to relaxation and amusement. So long as he continued quarter-master of the Volunteer Cavalry, of course he had, even while in Edinburgh, some occasional horse exercise; but, in general, his town life henceforth was in that respect as inactive as his country life ever was the reverse. He scorned for a long while to attach any consequence to this complete alternation of habits; but we shall find him confessing in the sequel, that it proved highly injurious to his bodily health.

I ought to say a few words on Scott's method of treating his children in their early days. He had now two boys and two girls;—and he never had more. He was not one of those who take much delight in a mere infant: but no father ever devoted more time and tender

care to his offspring than he did to each of his, as they successively reached the age when they could listen to him, and understand his talk. Like their mute playmates, Camp and the greyhounds, they had at all times free access to his study; he never considered their tattle as any disturbance; they went and came as pleased their fancy; he was always ready to answer their questions; and when they, unconscious how he was engaged, entreated him to lay down his pen and tell them a story, he would take them on his knee, repeat a ballad or a legend, kiss them, and set them down again to their marbles or ninepins, and resume his labour as if refreshed by the interruption. From a very early age he made them dine at table, and "to sit up to supper" was the great reward when they had been "very good bairns." In short, he considered it as the highest duty as well as the sweetest pleasure of a parent to be the companion of his children; he partook all their little joys and sorrows, and made his kind informal instructions to blend so easily and playfully with the current of their own sayings and doings, that so far from regarding him with any distant awe, it was never thought that any sport or diversion could go on in the right way, unless *papa* were of the party, or that the rainiest day could be dull, so he were at home.

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ties also. He exercised the memory, by selecting for tasks of recitation passages of popular verse the most likely to catch the fancy of children; and gradually familiarized them with the ancient history of their own country, by arresting attention, in the course of his own oral narrations, on incidents and characters of a similar description. Nor did he neglect to use the same means of quickening curiosity as to the events of sacred history. On Sunday he never rode—at least not until his growing infirmity made his pony almost necessary to him—for it was his principle that all domestic animals have a full right to their Sabbath of rest; but after he had read the church service, he usually walked with his whole family, dogs included, to some favourite spot at a considerable distance from the house—most frequently the ruined tower of Elibank—and there dined with them in the open air on a basket of cold provisions, mixing his wine with the water of the brook beside which they all were grouped around him on the turf; and here, or at home, if the weather kept them from their ramble, his Sunday talk was just such a series of biblical lessons as that which we have preserved for the permanent use of rising generations, in his *Tales of a Grandfather*, on the early history of Scotland.

By many external accomplishments, either in girl or boy, he set little store. He delighted to hear his daughters sing an old ditty, or one of his own framing; but, so the singer appeared to feel the spirit of her ballad, he was not at all critical of the technical execution. There was one thing, however, on which he fixed his heart hardly less than the ancient Persians of the *Cyropædia*: like them, next to love of truth, he held love of horsemanship for the prime point of education. As soon as his eldest girl could sit a pony, she was made the regular attendant of his mountain rides; and they all, as they attained sufficient strength, had the like advancement. He taught them to think nothing of tumbles, and habituated them to his own reckless delight in perilous fords and flooded streams; and they all imbibed in great perfection his passion for horses—as well, I may venture to add, as his deep reverence for the more important article of that Persian training. “Without

courage," he said, "there cannot be truth; and without truth there can be no other virtue."

He had a horror of boarding-schools; never allowed his girls to learn anything out of his own house; and chose their governess—Miss Miller—who about this time was domesticated with them, and never left them while they needed one,—with far greater regard to her kind good temper and excellent moral and religious principles, than to the measure of her attainments in what are called fashionable accomplishments. The admirable system of education for boys in Scotland combines all the advantages of public and private instruction; his carried their satchels to the High-School, when the family was in Edinburgh, just as he had done before them, and shared of course the evening society of their happy home. But he rarely, if ever, left them in town, when he could himself be in the country; and at Ashestiel he was, for better or for worse, his eldest boy's daily tutor, after he began Latin.

I should have mentioned sooner the death of Camp, the first of not a few dogs whose names will be "freshly remembered" as long as their master's works are popular. This favourite began to droop early in 1808, and became incapable of accompanying Scott in his rides; but he preserved his affection and sagacity to the last. At Ashestiel, as the servant was laying the cloth for dinner, he would address the dog lying on his mat by the fire, and say, "Camp, my good fellow, the Sheriff's coming home by the ford—or by the hill;" and the sick animal would immediately bestir himself to welcome his master, going out at the back door or the front door, according to the direction given, and advancing as far as he was able, either towards the ford of the Tweed, or the bridge over the Glenkinnon burn beyond Laird Nippy's gate. He died about January, 1809, and was buried in a fine moonlight night, in the little garden behind the house in Castle Street, immediately opposite to the window at which Scott usually sat writing. My wife tells me she remembers the whole family standing in tears about the grave, as her father himself smoothed down the turf above Camp with the saddest expression of face she had ever seen in him. He had been engaged

to dine abroad that day, but apologized on account of "the death of a dear old friend," and Mr. Macdonald Buchanan was not at all surprised that he should have done so, when it came out next morning that Camp was no more.

V

"THE LADY OF THE LAKE"

REMOVAL TO ABBOTSFORD

1810-1812

EARLY in May, 1810, the *Lady of the Lake* came out—as her two elder sisters had done—in all the majesty of quarto, with every accompanying grace of typography, and with, moreover, an engraved frontispiece of Saxon's portrait of Scott; the price of the book, two guineas.

Mr Robert Cadell, the publisher of this Memoir, who was then a young man in training for his profession in Edinburgh, retains a strong impression of the interest which the *Lady of the Lake* excited there for two or three months before it was on the counter. "James Ballantyne," he says, "read the cantos from time to time to select coteries, as they advanced at press. Common fame was loud in their favour; a great poem was on all hands anticipated. I do not recollect that any of all the author's works was ever looked for with more intense anxiety, or that any one of them excited a more extraordinary sensation when it did appear. The whole country rang with the praises of the poet—crowds set off to view the scenery of Loch Katrine, till then comparatively unknown; and as the book came out just before the season for excursions, every house and inn in that neighbourhood was crammed with a constant succession of visitors. It is a well-ascertained fact, that from the date of the publication of the *Lady of the Lake*, the post-horse duty in Scotland rose in an extraordinary degree, and indeed it continued to do so regularly for a

number of years, the author's succeeding works keeping up the enthusiasm for our scenery which he had thus originally created."

Throughout 1811, Scott's serious labour continued to be bestowed on the advancing edition of Swift; but this and all other literary tasks were frequently interrupted in consequence of an important step which he took early in the year; namely, the purchase of the first portion of what became in the sequel an extensive landed property in Roxburghshire. He had now the near prospect of coming into the beneficial use of the office he had so long filled without emolument in the Court of Session. For, connected with the other reforms in the Scotch judicature, was a plan for allowing the retirement of functionaries, who had served to an advanced period of life, upon pensions; should this meet the approbation of Parliament, there was little doubt that Mr. George Home would avail himself of the opportunity to resign the place of which he had for five years executed none of the duties; and the second Lord Melville, who had now succeeded his father as the virtual Minister for Scotland, had so much at heart a measure in itself obviously just and prudent, that little doubt could be entertained of the result of his efforts in its behalf. The Clerks of Session, it had been already settled, were henceforth to be paid not by fees, but by fixed salaries; the amount of each salary, it was soon after arranged, should be £1300 per annum; and contemplating a speedy accession of professional income so considerable as this, and at the same time a vigorous prosecution of his literary career, Scott fixed his eyes on a small farm within a few miles of Ashestiel, which it was understood would presently be in the market, and resolved to place himself by its acquisition in the situation to which he had probably from his earliest days looked forward as the highest object of ambition, that of a Tweedside Laird.—*Sit mihi sedes utinam senectæ!*

Of the two adjoining farms, both of which he had at this time thought of purchasing, he shortly afterwards made up his mind that one would be sufficient to begin with; and he selected that nearest to Ashestiel, and comprising the scene of Cessford's slaughter. The

person from whom he bought it was an old friend of his own, whose sterling worth he venerated, and whose humorous conversation rendered him an universal favourite among the gentry of the Forest—the late Rev. Dr. Robert Douglas, minister of Galashiels—the same man to whom Mrs. Cockburn described the juvenile prodigy of George's Square, in November, 1777. Dr. Douglas had never resided on the property, and his efforts to embellish it had been limited to one stripe of firs, so long and so narrow that Scott likened it to a black hair-comb. It ran from the precincts of the homestead towards *Turnagain*, and has bequeathed the name of *the Doctor's redding-kame* to the mass of nobler trees amidst which its dark straight line can now hardly be traced. The farm consisted of a rich meadow or haugh along the banks of the river, and about a hundred acres of undulated ground behind, all in a neglected state, undrained, wretchedly enclosed, much of it covered with nothing better than the native heath. The farm-house itself was small and poor, with a common *kail-yard* on one flank, and a staring barn of the Doctor's erection on the other; while in front appeared a filthy pond covered with ducks and duckweed, from which the whole tenement had derived the unharmonious designation of *Clarty Hole*. But the Tweed was everything to him—a beautiful river, flowing broad and bright over a bed of milkwhite pebbles, unless here and there where it darkened into a deep pool, overhung as yet only by the birches and alders which had survived the statelier growth of the primitive Forest; and the first hour that he took possession he claimed for his farm the name of the adjoining *ford*, situated just above the influx of the classical tributary Gala. As might be guessed from the name of *Abbotsford*, these lands had all belonged of old to the great Abbey of Melrose; and indeed the Duke of Buccleuch, as the territorial representative of that religious brotherhood, still retains some seignorial rights over them, and almost all the surrounding district. Another feature of no small interest in Scott's eyes was an ancient Roman road leading from the Eildon hills to this ford, the remains of which, however, are now mostly sheltered from view amidst his numerous plantations.

The most graceful and picturesque of all the monastic ruins in Scotland, the Abbey of Melrose itself, is visible from many points in the immediate neighbourhood of the house; and last, not least, on the rising ground full in view across the river, the traveller may still observe the chief traces of that ancient British barrier, the *Catrail*.

Such was the territory on which Scott's prophetic eye already beheld rich pastures, embosomed among flourishing groves, where his children's children should thank the founder.

In January, 1812, Scott entered upon the enjoyment of his proper salary as a clerk of Session, which, with his sheriffdom, gave him from this time till very near the close of his life, a professional income of £1600 a-year.

Towards the end of May, 1812, the Sheriff finally removed from Ashestiel to Abbotsford. The day when this occurred was a sad one for many a poor neighbour—for they lost, both in him and his wife, very generous protectors. In such a place, among the few evils which counterbalance so many good things in the condition of the peasantry, the most afflicting is the want of access to medical advice. As far as their means and skill would go, they had both done their utmost to supply this want; and Mrs. Scott, in particular, had made it so much her business to visit the sick in their scattered cottages, and bestowed on them the contents of her medicine-chest as well as of the larder and cellar, with such unwearied kindness, that her name is never mentioned there to this day without some expression of tenderness. Scott's children remember the parting scene as one of unmixed affliction—but it had had, as we shall see, its lighter features.

Among the many amiable English friends whom he owed to his frequent visits at Rokeby Park, there was, I believe, none that had a higher place in his regard than the late Anne Lady Olvanley, the widow of the celebrated Chief-Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. He was fond of female society in general; but her ladyship was a woman after his heart; well born, and highly bred, but without the slightest tinge of the frivolities of modern fashion; soundly informed, and a

warm lover of literature and the arts, but holding in as great horror as himself the imbecile chatter and affected ecstasies of the bluestocking generation. Her ladyship had written to him early in May, by Miss Sarah Smith (now Mrs. Bartley), whom I have already mentioned as one of his theatrical favourites; and his answer contains, among other matters, a sketch of the "Forest Flitting."

"To the Right Honourable Lady Alvanley.

"Ashestiel, 25th May, 1812.

"I was honoured, my dear Lady Alvanley, by the kind letter which you sent me with our friend Miss Smith, whose talents are, I hope, receiving at Edinburgh the full meed of honourable applause which they so highly merit. It is very much against my will that I am forced to speak of them by report alone, for this being the term of removing, I am under the necessity of being at this farm to superintend the transference of my goods and chattels, a most miscellaneous collection, to a small property, about five miles down the Tweed, which I purchased last year. The neighbours have been much delighted with the procession of my furniture, in which old swords, bows, targets, and lances, made a very conspicuous show. A family of turkeys was accommodated within the helmet of some *preux* chevalier of ancient Border fame; and the very cows, for aught I know, were bearing banners and muskets. I assure your ladyship that this caravan, attended by a dozen of ragged rosy peasant children, carrying fishing-rods and spears, and leading ponies, greyhounds, and spaniels, would, as it crossed the Tweed, have furnished no bad subject for the pencil, and really reminded me of one of the gypsey groupes of Callot upon their march."

This was one of the busiest summers of Scott's busy life. Till the 12th of July he was at his post in the Court of Session five days every week; but every Saturday evening found him at Abbotsford, to observe the progress his labours had made within doors and without in his absence; and on Monday night he returned to Edinburgh. Even before the Summer Session commenced, he appears to have made some advance in his

Rokeby, for he writes to Mr. Morritt, from Abbotsford, on the 4th of May—"As for the house and the poem, there are twelve masons hammering at the one and one poor noddle at the other—so they are both in progress;" and his literary labours throughout the long vacation were continued under the same sort of disadvantage. That autumn he had, in fact, no room at all for himself. The only parlour which had been hammered into anything like habitable condition, served at once for dining-room, drawing-room, school-room, and study. A window looking to the river was kept sacred to his desk; an old bed-curtain was nailed up across the room close behind his chair, and there, whenever the spade, the dibble, or the chisel (for he took his full share in all the work on hand) was laid aside, he pursued his poetical tasks, apparently undisturbed and unannoyed by the surrounding confusion of masons and carpenters, to say nothing of the lady's small talk, the children's babble among themselves, or their repetition of their lessons. The truth no doubt was, that when at his desk he did little more, as far as regarded *poetry*, than write down the lines which he had fashioned in his mind while pursuing his vocation as a planter, upon that bank which received originally, by way of joke, the title of *the thicket*. "I am now," he says to Ellis (Oct. 17), "adorning a patch of naked land with trees *facturis nepotibus umbram*, for I shall never live to enjoy their shade myself otherwise than in the recumbent posture of Tityrus and Menalcas." But he did live to see *the thicket* deserve not only that name, but a nobler one; and to fell with his own hand many a well-grown tree that he had planted there.

VI

VISIT TO ROKEBY

1812

SCOTT had promised to spend part of this autumn at Rokeby Park himself; but now, busied as he was with

his planting operations at home, and continually urged by Ballantyne to have the poem ready for publication by Christmas, he would willingly have trusted his friend's knowledge in place of his own observation and research. Mr. Morritt gave him in reply various particulars which I need not here repeat, but added—"I am really sorry, my dear Scott, at your abandonment of your kind intention of visiting Rokeby—and my sorrow is not quite selfish—for seriously, I wish you could have come, if but for a few days, in order, on the spot, to settle accurately in your mind the localities of the new poem, and all their petty circumstances, of which there are many that would give interest and ornament to your descriptions. I am too much flattered by your proposal of inscribing the poem to me, not to accept it with gratitude and pleasure. I am more than ever anxious for your success—the Lady of the Lake more than succeeded—I think Don Roderick is less popular—I want this work to be another Lady at the least. Surely it would be worth your while for such an object to spend a week of your time, and a portion of your Old Man's salary, in a mail-coach flight hither, were it merely to renew your acquaintance with the country, and to rectify the little misconceptions of a cursory view. Ever affectionately yours,

J. B. S. M."

This appeal was not to be resisted. Scott proceeded the week after to Rokeby, by the way of Flodden and Hexham, travelling on horseback, his eldest boy and girl on their poneys, while Mrs Scott followed them in the carriage. Two little incidents that diversified this ride through Northumberland have found their way into print already; but, as he was fond of telling them both down to the end of his days, I must give them a place here also. Halting at Flodden to expound the field of battle to his young folks, he found that Marmion had, as might have been expected, benefited the keeper of the public house there very largely; and the village Boniface, overflowing with gratitude, expressed his anxiety to have a *Scott's Head* for his sign-post. The poet demurred to this proposal, and assured mine host

that nothing could be more appropriate than the portraiture of a foaming tankard, which already surmounted his door-way. "Why, the painter-man has not made an ill job," said the landlord, "but I would fain have something more connected with the book that has brought me so much good custom." He produced a well-thumbed copy, and handing it to the author, begged he would at least suggest a motto from the tale of Flodden Field. Scott opened the book at the death scene of the hero, and his eye was immediately caught by the "inscription" in black letter—

"Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray
For the kind soul of Sibyl Grey," etc.

"Well, my friend," said he, "what more would you have? You need but strike out one letter in the first of these lines, and make your painter-man, the next time he comes this way, print between the jolly tankard and your own name

'Drink, weary pilgrim, drink and PAY.'

Scott was delighted to find, on his return, that this suggestion had been adopted, and for aught I know, the romantic legend may still be visible.

The other story I shall give in the words of Mr. Gillies. "It happened at a small country town that Scott suddenly required medical advice for one of his servants, and, on inquiring if there was any doctor at the place, was told that there was two—one long established, and the other a new comer. The latter gentleman, being luckily found at home, soon made his appearance;—a grave, sagacious-looking personage, attired in black, with a shovel hat, in whom, to his utter astonishment, Sir Walter recognised a Scotch blacksmith, who had formerly practised, with tolerable success, as a veterinary operator in the neighbourhood of Ashestiel. 'How, in all the world!' exclaimed he, 'can it be possible that this is John Lundie?'—'In troth is it, your honour—just *a' that's for him.*'—'Well, but let us hear: you were a *horse-doctor* before; now, it seems, you are a *man-doctor*; how do you get on?'—'Ou, just extraordinar weel; for your honour maun ken

my practice is vera sure and orthodox. I depend entirely upon twa *simples*,—‘And what may their names be? Perhaps it is a secret?’—‘I’ll tell your honour,’ in a low tone; ‘my twa simples are just *laudamy* and *calamy*!’—‘Simples with a vengeance!’ replied Scott. ‘But John, do you never happen to *kill* any of your patients?’—‘Kill? Ou ay, may be sae! Whiles they die, and whiles no;—but it’s the will o’ Providence. *Ony how, your honour, it wad be lang before it makes up for Flodden!*’”

At Rokeby, on this occasion, Scott remained about a week; and I transcribe the following brief account of his proceedings while there from Mr. Morritt’s *Memo-randum*:—“I had, of course,” he says, “had many previous opportunities of testing the almost conscientious fidelity of his local descriptions; but I could not help being singularly struck with the lights which this visit threw on that characteristic of his compositions. The morning after he arrived he said—‘You have often given me materials for romance—now I want a good robber’s cave, and an old church of the right sort.’ We rode out, and he found what he wanted in the ancient slate quarries of Brignal and the ruined Abbey of Eggleston. I observed him noting down even the peculiar little wild flowers and herbs that accidentally grew round and on the side of a bold crag near his intended cave of Guy Denzil; and could not help saying, that as he was not to be upon oath in his work, daisies, violets, and primroses would be as poetical as any of the humble plants he was examining. I laughed, in short, at his scrupulousness; but I understood him when he replied, ‘that in nature herself no two scenes were exactly alike, and that whoever copied truly what was before his eyes, would possess the same variety in his descriptions, and exhibit apparently an imagination as boundless as the range of nature in the scenes he recorded; whereas—whoever trusted to imagination, would soon find his own mind circumscribed, and contracted to a few favourite images, and the repetition of these would sooner or later produce that very monotony and barrenness which had always haunted descriptive poetry in the hands of any but the patient

worshippers of truth. Besides which,' he said, 'local names and peculiarities make a fictitious story look so much better in the face.' In fact, from his boyish habits, he was but half satisfied with the most beautiful scenery when he could not connect with it some local legend, and when I was forced sometimes to confess with the Knife-grinder, 'Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir'—he would laugh and say, 'then let us make one—nothing so easy as to make a tradition.'"

The year 1812 had the usual share of minor literary labours—such as contributions to the journals; and before it closed, the Romance of Rokeby was finished.

According to the recollection of Mr. Cadell, though James Ballantyne read the poem, as the sheets were advancing through the press, to his usual circle of literary *dilettanti*, their whispers were far from exciting in Edinburgh such an intensity of expectation as had been witnessed in the case of *The Lady of the Lake*. He adds, however, that it was looked for with undiminished anxiety in the south. I well remember, being in those days a young student at Oxford, how the booksellers' shops there were beleaguered for the earliest copies, and how he that had been so fortunate as to secure one was followed to his chambers by a tribe of friends, all as eager to hear it read as ever horse-jockeys were to see the conclusion of a match at Newmarket; and indeed not a few of those enthusiastic academics had bets depending on the issue of the struggle, which they considered the elder favourite as making, to keep his own ground against the fiery rivalry of Childe Harold.

VII

MONEY DIFFICULTIES. "WAVERLEY"

1813-1814

THE difficulties of the Ballantynes were by this time well known throughout the commercial circles not only of Edinburgh, but of London; and a report of their

actual bankruptcy, with the addition that Scott was engaged as their surety to the extent of £20,000, found its way to Mr. Morritt about the beginning of November. This dear friend wrote to him, in the utmost anxiety, and made liberal offers of assistance in case the catastrophe might still be averted; but the term of Martinmas, always a critical one in Scotland, had passed before this letter reached Edinburgh, and Scott's answer will show symptoms of a clearing horizon. I think also there is one expression in it which could hardly have failed to convey to Mr. Morritt that his friend was involved more deeply than he had ever acknowledged, in the concerns of the Messrs. Ballantyne.

"To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park.

"Edinburgh, 20th November, 1813.

"I did not answer your very kind letter, my dear Morritt, until I could put your friendly heart to rest upon the report you have heard, which I could not do entirely until this term of Martinmas was passed. I have the pleasure to say that there is no truth whatever in the Ballantynes' reported bankruptcy. They have had severe difficulties for the last four months to make their resources balance the demands upon them, and I, having the price of Rokeby, and other monies in their hands, have had considerable reason for apprehension, and no slight degree of plague and trouble. They have, however, been so well supported, that I have got out of hot water upon their account. They are winding up their bookselling concern with great regularity, and are to abide hereafter by the printing-office, which, with its stock, etc., will revert to them fairly.

"I have been able to redeem the offspring of my brain, and they are like to pay me like grateful children. This matter has set me a thinking about money more seriously than ever I did in my life, and I have begun by insuring my life for £4000, to secure some ready cash to my family should I slip girths suddenly. I think my other property, library, etc., may be worth about £12,000, and I have not much debt.

"Upon the whole, I see no prospect of any loss what-

ever. Although in the course of human events I may be disappointed, there certainly *can* be none to vex your kind and affectionate heart on my account. I am young, with a large official income, and if I lose anything now, I have gained a great deal in my day. I cannot tell you, and will not attempt to tell you, how much I was affected by your letter—so much, indeed, that for several days I could not make my mind up to express myself on the subject. Thank God! all real danger was yesterday put over—and I will write, in two or three days, a funny letter, without any of these vile cash matters, of which it may be said there is no living with them nor without them. Ever yours, most truly,

“WALTER SCOTT.”

All these annoyances produced no change whatever in Scott's habits of literary industry. During these anxious months of September, October, and November, he kept feeding James Ballantyne's press, from day to day, both with the annotated text of the closing volumes of Swift's works, and with the MS. of his *Life of the Dean*. He had also proceeded to mature in his own mind the plan of the *Lord of the Isles*, and executed such a portion of the *First Canto* as gave him confidence to renew his negotiations with Constable for the sale of the whole, or part of its copyright. It was, moreover, at this period, that, looking into an old cabinet in search of some fishing-tackle, his eye chanced to light once more on the *Ashestiel* fragment of *Waverley*.—He read over those introductory chapters—thought they had been undervalued—and determined to finish the story.

There appeared in *The Scots Magazine*, for February 1st, 1814, an announcement, that “*Waverley*; or, ‘tis Sixty Years Since, a novel, in 3 vols. 12mo,” would be published in March. And before Scott came into Edinburgh, at the close of the Christmas vacation, on the 12th of January, Mr. Erskine had perused the greater part of the first volume, and expressed his decided opinion that *Waverley* would prove the most popular of all his friend's writings. The MS. was forthwith copied by John Ballantyne, and sent to press.

It was published on the 7th of July; and two days afterwards he thus writes :

"I must account for my own laziness, which I do by referring you to a small anonymous sort of a novel, in three volumes, *Waverley*, which you will receive by the mail of this day. It was a very old attempt of mine to embody some traits of those characters and manners peculiar to Scotland, the last remnants of which vanished during my own youth, so that few or no traces now remain. I had written great part of the first volume, and sketched other passages, when I mislaid the MS., and only found it by the merest accident as I was rummaging the drawers of an old cabinet; and I took the fancy of finishing it, which I did so fast, that the last two volumes were written in three weeks. I had a great deal of fun in the accomplishment of this task, though I do not expect that it will be popular in the south, as much of the humour, if there be any, is local, and some of it even professional. You, however, who are an adopted Scotchman, will find some amusement in it. It has made a very strong impression here, and the good people of Edinburgh are busied in tracing the author, and in finding out originals for the portraits it contains. In the first case, they will probably find it difficult to convict the guilty author, although he is far from escaping suspicion. Jeffrey has offered to make oath that it is mine, and another great critic has tendered his affidavit *ex contrario*; so that these authorities have divided the Gude Town. However, the thing has succeeded very well, and is thought highly of. I don't know if it has got to London yet. I intend to maintain my *incognito*."

This statement of the foregoing letter, as to the time occupied in the composition of the second and third volumes of *Waverley*, recalls to my memory a trifling anecdote connected with a dear friend of my youth. Happening to pass through Edinburgh in June, 1814, I dined one day with the gentleman in question (now the Honourable William Menzies, one of the Supreme Judges at the Cape of Good Hope), whose residence was then in George Street, situated very near to, and at right angles with, North Castle Street. It was a party

of very young persons, most of them, like Menzies and myself, destined for the Bar of Scotland, all gay and thoughtless, enjoying the first flush of manhood, with little remembrance of the yesterday, or care of the morrow. When my companion's worthy father and uncle, after seeing two or three bottles go round, left the juveniles to themselves, the weather being hot, we adjourned to a library which had one large window looking northwards. After carousing here for an hour or more, I observed that a shade had come over the aspect of my friend, who happened to be placed immediately opposite to myself, and said something that intimated a fear of his being unwell. "No," said he, "I shall be well enough presently, if you will only let me sit where you are, and take my chair; for there is a confounded hand in sight of me here, which has often bothered me before, and now it won't let me fill my glass with a good will." I rose to change places with him accordingly, and he pointed out to me this hand which, like the writing on Belshazzar's wall, disturbed his hour of hilarity. "Since we sat down," he said, "I have been watching it—it fascinates my eye—it never stops—page after page is finished and thrown on that heap of MS. and still it goes on unwearied—and so it will be till candles are brought in, and God knows how long after that. It is the same every night—I can't stand a sight of it when I am not at my books."—"Some stupid, dogged, engrossing clerk, probably," exclaimed myself, or some other giddy youth in our society. "No, boys," said our host, "I well know what hand it is—'tis Walter Scott's." This was the hand that, in the evenings of three summer weeks, wrote the two last volumes of Waverley.

VIII

MEETING OF SCOTT AND BYRON
SCOTT'S VISIT TO THE CONTINENT

1814-1815

ON the rising of the Court of Session in March [1815], Mr. and Mrs. Scott went by sea to London with their eldest girl, whom, being yet too young for general society, they again deposited with Joanna Baillie at Hampstead, while they themselves resumed, for two months, their usual quarters at kind Miss Dumergue's, in Piccadilly. Six years had elapsed since Scott last appeared in the metropolis; and brilliant as his reception had then been, it was still more so on the present occasion.

And now took place James Ballantyne's "mighty consummation of the meeting of the two bards." Scott's own account of it, in a letter to Mr. Moore, must have been seen by most of my readers; yet I think it ought also to find a place here. "It was," he says, "in the spring of 1815, that, chancing to be in London, I had the advantage of a personal introduction to Lord Byron. Report had prepared me to meet a man of peculiar habits and a quick temper, and I had some doubts whether we were likely to suit each other in society. I was most agreeably disappointed in this respect. I found Lord Byron in the highest degree courteous, and even kind. We met for an hour or two almost daily, in Mr. Murray's drawing-room, and found a great deal to say to each other. We also met frequently in parties and evening society, so that for about two months I had the advantage of a considerable intimacy with this distinguished individual. Our sentiments agreed a good deal, except upon the subjects of religion and politics, upon neither of which I was inclined to believe that Lord Byron entertained very fixed opinions. I remember saying to him, that I really thought that if he lived a few years he would alter his sentiments. He

answered, rather sharply—‘I suppose you are one of those who prophesy I shall turn Methodist.’ I replied—‘No; I don’t expect your conversion to be of such an ordinary kind. I would rather look to see you retreat upon the Catholic faith, and distinguish yourself by the austerity of your penances. The species of religion to which you must, or may, one day attach yourself, must exercise a strong power on the imagination.’ He smiled gravely, and seemed to allow I might be right.

“On politics, he used sometimes to express a high strain of what is now called Liberalism; but it appeared to me that the pleasure it afforded him, as a vehicle for displaying his wit and satire against individuals in office, was at the bottom of this habit of thinking, rather than any real conviction of the political principles on which he talked. He was certainly proud of his rank and ancient family, and, in that respect, as much an aristocrat as was consistent with good sense and good breeding. Some disgusts, how adopted I know not, seemed to me to have given this peculiar and (as it appeared to me) contradictory cast of mind; but, at heart, I would have termed Byron a patrician on principle.

“Lord Byron’s reading did not seem to me to have been very extensive, either in poetry or history. Having the advantage of him in that respect, and possessing a good competent share of such reading as is little read, I was sometimes able to put under his eye objects which had for him the interest of novelty. I remember particularly repeating to him the fine poem of Hardyknute, an imitation of the old Scottish ballad, with which he was so much affected, that some one who was in the same apartment asked me what I could possibly have been telling Byron by which he was so much agitated.

“I saw Byron for the last time in 1815, after I returned from France. He dined, or lunched, with me at Long’s, in Bond Street. I never saw him so full of gaiety and good-humour, to which the presence of Mr. Mathews, the comedian, added not a little. Poor Terry was also present. After one of the gayest parties I ever was present at, my fellow-traveller, Mr. Scott of Gala, and I, set off for Scotland, and I never saw Lord Byron again. Several letters passed between us—one perhaps

every half-year. Like the old heroes in Homer, we exchanged gifts. I gave Byron a beautiful dagger mounted with gold, which had been the property of the redoubted Elfi Bey. But I was to play the part of Diomed in the Iliad, for Byron sent me, some time after, a large sepulchral vase of silver. It was full of dead men's bones, and had inscriptions on two sides of the base. One ran thus:—'The bones contained in this urn were found in certain ancient sepulchres within the long walls of Athens, in the month of February, 1811.' The other face bears the lines of Juvenal—'*Expende—quot libras in duce summo invenies?—Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula.*'

"To these I have added a third inscription, in these words—'The gift of Lord Byron to Walter Scott.' There was a letter with this vase, more valuable to me than the gift itself, from the kindness with which the donor expressed himself towards me. I left it naturally in the urn with the bones; but it is now missing. As the theft was not of a nature to be practised by a mere domestic, I am compelled to suspect the inhospitality of some individual of higher station, most gratuitously exercised certainly, since, after what I have here said, no one will probably choose to boast of possessing this literary curiosity.

"We had a good deal of laughing I remember, on what the public might be supposed to think, or say, concerning the gloomy and ominous nature of our mutual gifts."

That Scott should have been among the first civilians who hurried over to see the field of Waterloo, and hear English bugles sound about the walls of Paris, could have surprised none who knew the lively concern he had always taken in the military efforts of his countrymen, and the career of the illustrious captain who had taught them to re-establish the renown of Agincourt and Blenheim,—

"Victor of Assaye's Eastern plain,
Victor of all the fields of Spain."

No sooner was Scott's purpose known, than some of his young neighbours in the country proposed to join

his excursion; and, in company with three of them, namely, his kinsman, John Scott of Gala—Alexander Pringle, the younger of Whytbank (now M.P. for Selkirkshire)—and Robert Bruce, advocate (now Sheriff of Argyle)—he left Edinburgh for the south, at 5 A.M. on the 27th of July.

The following is the letter which Scott addressed to the Duke of Buccleuch, immediately after seeing the field of Waterloo :

"To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, etc.

"My Dear Lord Duke,—I promised to let you hear of my wanderings, however unimportant; and have now the pleasure of informing your Grace, that I am at this present time an inhabitant of the Premier Hotel de Cambrai, after having been about a week upon the Continent. We landed at Helvoet, and proceeded to Brussels, by Bergen-op-Zoom and Antwerp, both of which are very strongly fortified. The ravages of war are little remarked in a country so rich by nature; but everything seems at present stationary, or rather retrograde, where capital is required. The châteaux are deserted, and going to decay; no new houses are built, and those of older date are passing rapidly into the possession of a class inferior to those for whom we must suppose them to have been built. Even the old gentlewoman of Babylon has lost much of her splendour, and her robes and pomp are of a description far subordinate to the costume of her more magnificent days. The dresses of the priests were worn and shabby, both at Antwerp and Brussels, and reminded me of the decayed wardrobe of a bankrupt theatre: yet, though the gentry and priesthood have suffered, the eternal bounty of nature has protected the lower ranks against much distress. The unexampled fertility of the soil gives them all, and more than they want; and could they but sell the grain which they raise in the Netherlands, nothing else would be wanting to render them the richest people (common people, that is to say) in the world.

"On Wednesday last, I rode over the field of Waterloo, now for ever consecrated to immortality. The more ghastly tokens of the carnage are now removed. the

bodies both of men and horses being either burned or buried; but all the ground is still torn with the shot and shells, and covered with cartridges, old hats, and shoes, and various relics of the fray which the peasants have not thought worth removing. Besides, at Waterloo and all the hamlets in the vicinage, there is a mart established for cuirasses; for the eagles worn by the imperial guard on their caps; for casques, swords, carabines, and similar articles. I have bought two handsome cuirasses, and intend them, one for Bowhill, and one for Abbotsford, if I can get them safe over, which Major Pryse Gordon has promised to manage for me. I have also, for your Grace, one of the little memorandum-books which I picked up on the field, in which every French soldier was obliged to enter his receipts and expenditure, his services, and even his punishments. The field was covered with fragments of these records. I also got a good MS. collection of French songs, probably the work of some young officer, and a croix of the Legion of Honour. I enclose, under another cover, a sketch of the battle, made at Brussels. It is not, I understand, strictly accurate; but sufficiently so to give a good notion of what took place. In fact, it would require twenty separate plans to give an idea of the battle at its various stages. The front, upon which the armies engaged, does not exceed a long mile. Our line, indeed, originally extended half-a-mile farther towards the village of Brain-la-Leude; but as the French indicated no disposition to attack in that direction, the troops which occupied this space were gradually concentrated by Lord Wellington, and made to advance till they had reached Hougomont—a sort of château, with a garden and wood attached to it, which was powerfully and effectually maintained by the Guards during the action. This place was particularly interesting. It was a quiet-looking gentleman's house, which had been burnt by the French shells. The defenders, burnt out of the house itself, betook themselves to the little garden, where, breaking loop-holes through the brick walls, they kept up a most destructive fire on the assailants, who had possessed themselves of a little wood which surrounds the villa on one side. The rest of the

ground, excepting this château, and a farm-house called La Hay Sainte, early taken, and long held, by the French, because it was too close under the brow of the descent on which our artillery was placed to admit of the pieces being depressed so as to play into it,—the rest of the ground, I say, is quite open, and lies between two ridges, one of which (Mont St. Jean) was constantly occupied by the English; the other, upon which is the farm of La Belle Alliance, was the position of the French. The slopes between are gentle and varied; the ground everywhere practicable for cavalry, as was well experienced on that memorable day. The cuirassiers, despite their arms of proof, were quite inferior to our heavy dragoons. The meeting of the two bodies occasioned a noise, not unaptly compared to the tinkering and hammering of a smith's shop. Generally the cuirassiers came on stooping their heads very low, and giving point; the British frequently struck away their casques while they were in this position, and then laid at the bare head. Officers and soldiers all fought hand to hand without distinction; and many of the former owed their life to dexterity at their weapon, and personal strength of body. Shaw, the milling Life-Guardsman, whom your Grace may remember among the champions of The Fancy, maintained the honour of the fist, and killed or disabled upwards of twenty Frenchmen with his single arm, until he was killed by the assault of numbers. At one place, where there is a precipitous sand or gravel pit, the heavy English cavalry drove many of the cuirassiers over pell-mell, and followed over themselves, like fox-hunters. The conduct of the infantry and artillery was equally, or, if possible, more distinguished, and it was all fully necessary; for, besides that our army was much outnumbered, a great part of the sum-total were foreigners. Of these, the Brunswickers and Hanoverians behaved very well; the Belgians but sorrily enough. On one occasion, when a Belgic regiment fairly ran off, Lord Wellington rode up to them, and said—'My lads, you must be a little blown; come, do take your breath for a moment, and then we'll go back, and try if we can do a little better;' and he actually carried them back to the charge. He

was, indeed, upon that day, everywhere, and the soul of everything; nor could less than his personal endeavours have supported the spirits of the men through a contest so long, so desperate, and so unequal. At his last attack, Buonaparte brought up 15,000 of his Guard, who had never drawn trigger during the day. It was upon their failure that his hopes abandoned him.

"I spoke long with a shrewd Flemish peasant, called John De Costar, whom he had seized upon as his guide, and who remained beside him the whole day, and afterwards accompanied him in his flight as far as Charleroi. Your Grace may be sure that I interrogated Mynheer very closely about what he heard and saw. He guided me to the spot where Buonaparte remained during the latter part of the action. It was in the highway from Brussels to Charleroi, where it runs between two high banks, on each of which was a French battery. He was pretty well sheltered from the English fire; and, though many bullets flew over his head, neither he nor any of his suite were touched. His other stations, during that day, were still more remote from all danger. The story of his having an observatory erected for him is a mistake. There is such a thing, and he repaired to it during the action; but it was built or erected some months before, for the purpose of a trigonometrical survey of the country, by the King of the Netherlands. Bony's last position was nearly fronting a tree where the Duke of Wellington was stationed; there was not more than a quarter of a mile between them; but Bony was well sheltered, and the Duke so much exposed, that the tree is barked in several places by the cannon-balls levelled at him. As for Bony, De Costar says he was very cool during the whole day, and even gay. As the cannon-balls flew over them, De Costar ducked; at which the Emperor laughed, and told him they would hit him all the same. At length, about the time he made his grand and last effort, the fire of the Prussian artillery was heard upon his right, and the heads of their columns became visible pressing out of the woods. Aid-de-camp after aid-de-camp came with the tidings of their advance, to which Bony only replied, *Attendez, attendez un instant*, until he saw his troops, *fantassins*

et cavaliers, return in disorder from the attack.—He then observed hastily to a general beside him, *Je crois qu'ils sont mêlés*. The person to whom he spoke, hastily raised the spy-glass to his eye; but Bony, whom the first glance had satisfied of their total discomfiture, bent his face to the ground, and shook his head twice, his complexion being then as pale as death. The general then said something, to which Buonaparte answered, *C'est trop tard—sauvons nous*. Just at that moment, the allied troops, cavalry and infantry, appeared in full advance on all hands; and the Prussians, operating upon the right flank of the French, were rapidly gaining their rear. Bony, therefore, was compelled to abandon the high-road, which, besides, was choked with dead, with baggage, and with cannon; and, gaining the open country, kept at full gallop, until he gained, like Johnnie Cope, the van of the flying army. The marshals followed his example; and it was the most complete *sauve qui peut* that can well be imagined. Nevertheless, the prisoners who were brought into Brussels maintained their national impudence, and boldly avowed their intention of sacking the city with every sort of severity. At the same time they had friends there. One man of rank and wealth went over to Bony during the action, and I saw his hotel converted into an hospital for wounded soldiers. It occupied one-half of one of the sides of the Place Royale, a noble square, which your Grace has probably seen. But, in general, the inhabitants of Brussels were very differently disposed; and their benevolence to our poor wounded fellows was unbounded. The difficulty was to prevent them from killing their guests with kindness, by giving them butcher's meat and wine during their fever."

From Paris, Mr. Bruce and Mr. Pringle went on to Switzerland, leaving the Poet and Gala to return home together, which they did by way of Dieppe, Brighton, and London. It was here, on the 14th of September, that Scott had that last meeting with Lord Byron, alluded to in his communication to Mr. Moore, already quoted. He carried his young friend in the morning to call on Lord Byron, who agreed to dine with them

at their hotel, where he met also Charles Mathews and Daniel Terry. The only survivor of the party has recorded it in his note-book as the most interesting day he ever spent. "How I did stare," he says, "at Byron's beautiful pale face, like a spirit's—good or evil. But he was *bitter*—what a contrast to Scott! Among other anecdotes of British prowess and spirit, Scott mentioned that a young gentleman ——— had been awfully shot in the head while conveying an order from the Duke, and yet staggered on, and delivered his message when at the point of death. Ha!" said Byron, "I daresay he could do as well as most people without his head—it was never of much use to him." Waterloo did not delight him, probably—and Scott could talk or think of scarcely anything else."

Mathews accompanied them as far as Warwick and Kenilworth, both of which castles the poet had seen before, but now re-examined with particular curiosity. They spent a night at Sheffield; and early next morning Scott sallied forth to provide himself with a planter's knife of the most complex contrivance and finished workmanship. Having secured one to his mind, and which for many years after was his constant pocket-companion, he wrote his name on a card, "Walter Scott, Abbotsford," and directed it to be engraved on the handle. On his mentioning this acquisition at breakfast, young Gala expressed his desire to equip himself in like fashion, and was directed to the shop accordingly. When he had purchased a similar knife, and produced his name in turn for the engraver, the master cutler eyed the signature for a moment, and exclaimed—"John Scott of Gala! Well, I hope your ticket may serve me in as good stead as another Mr. Scott's has just done. Upon my word, one of my best men, an honest fellow from the North, went out of his senses when he saw it—he offered me a week's work if I would let him keep it to himself—and I took *Saunders* at his word." Scott used to talk of this as one of the most gratifying compliments he ever received in his literary capacity.

A charming page in Mr. Washington Irving's "Abbotsford and Newstead," affords us another anecdote connected with this return from Paris. Two years

after this time, when the amiable American visited Scott, he walked with him to a quarry, where his people were at work. "The face of the humblest dependent," he says, "brightened at his approach—all paused from their labour to have a pleasant 'crack wi' the laird.' Among the rest was a tall straight old fellow, with a healthful complexion and silver hairs, and a small round-crowned white hat. He had been about to shoulder a hod, but paused, and stood looking at Scott with a slight sparkling of his blue eye as if waiting his turn; for the old fellow knew he was a favourite. Scott accosted him in an affable tone, and asked for a pinch of snuff. The old man drew forth a horn snuff-box. 'Hoot man,' said Scott, 'not that old mull. Where's the bonnie French one that I brought you from Paris?'—'Troth, your honour,' replied the old fellow, 'sic a mull as that is nae for week-days.' On leaving the quarry, Scott informed me, that, when absent at Paris, he had purchased several trifling articles as presents for his dependents, and, among others, the gay snuff-box in question, which was so carefully reserved for Sundays by the veteran. 'It was not so much the value of the gifts,' said he, 'that pleased them, as the idea that the laird should think of them when so far away.'"

IX

WILLIAM LAIDLAW. WASHINGTON IRVING

1815-1817

EARLY in May [1816] appeared the novel of "The Anti-quary," which seems to have been begun a little before the close of 1815.

It may be worth noting, that it was in correcting the proof-sheets of this novel that Scott first took to equipping his chapters with mottoes of his own fabrication. On one occasion he happened to ask John Ballantyne, who was sitting by him, to hunt for a particular passage in Beaumont and Fletcher. John did as he was bid, but did not succeed in discovering the lines. "Hang

it, Johnnie," cried Scott, "I believe I can make a motto sooner than you will find one." He did so accordingly; and from that hour, whenever memory failed to suggest an appropriate epigraph, he had recourse to the inexhaustible mines of "*old play*" or "*old ballad*," to which we owe some of the most exquisite verses that ever flowed from his pen.

Shortly before this time, Mr. William Laidlaw had met with misfortunes, which rendered it necessary for him to give up the lease of a farm, on which he had been for some years settled, in Mid-Lothian. He was now anxiously looking about him for some new establishment, and it occurred to Scott that it might be mutually advantageous, as well as agreeable, if his excellent friend would consent to come and occupy a house on his property, and endeavour, under his guidance, to make such literary exertions as might raise his income to an amount adequate for his comfort. The prospect of obtaining such a neighbour was, no doubt, the more welcome to "Abbotsford and Kaeside," from its opening at this period of fluctuating health; and Laidlaw, who had for twenty years loved and revered him, considered the proposal with far greater delight than the most lucrative appointment on any noble domain in the island could have afforded him. Though possessed of a lively and searching sagacity as to things in general, he had always been as to his own worldly interests simple as a child. His tastes and habits were all modest; and when he looked forward to spending the remainder of what had not hitherto been a successful life, under the shadow of the genius that he had worshipped almost from boyhood, his gentle heart was all happiness. He surveyed with glistening eyes the humble cottage in which his friend proposed to lodge him, his wife, and his little ones, and said to himself that he should write no more sad songs on *Forest Flittings*.

Scott had received "the History of New York by Knickerbocker," shortly after its appearance in 1812, from an accomplished American traveller, Mr. Brevoort; and the admirable humour of this early work had led him to anticipate the brilliant career which its author has since run. Mr. Thomas Campbell, being no

stranger to Scott's high estimation of Irving's genius, gave him a letter of introduction, which, halting his chaise on the high-road above Abbotsford, he modestly sent down to the house "with a card, on which he had written, that he was on his way to the ruins of Melrose, and wished to know whether it would be agreeable to Mr. Scott to receive a visit from him in the course of the morning." Scott's family well remember the delight with which he received this announcement—he was at breakfast, and sallied forth instantly, dogs and children after him as usual, to greet the guest, and conduct him in person from the highway to the door.

"The noise of my chaise," says Irving, "had disturbed the quiet of the establishment. Out sallied the warder of the castle, a black greyhound, and leaping on one of the blocks of stone, began a furious barking. This alarm brought out the whole garrison of dogs, all open-mouthed and vociferous. In a little while, the lord of the castle himself made his appearance. I knew him at once, by the likenesses that had been published of him. He came limping up the gravel walk, aiding himself by a stout walking staff, but moving rapidly and with vigour. By his side jogged along a large iron-grey staghound, of most grave demeanour, who took no part in the clamour of the canine rabble, but seemed to consider himself bound, for the dignity of the house, to give me a courteous reception.

"Before Scott reached the gate, he called out in a hearty tone, welcoming me to Abbotsford, and asking news of Campbell. Arrived at the door of the chaise, he grasped me warmly by the hand: 'Come, drive down, drive down to the house,' said he; 'ye're just in time for breakfast, and afterwards ye shall see all the wonders of the Abbey.'

"I would have excused myself on the plea of having already made my breakfast. 'Hut, man,' cried he, 'a ride in the morning in the keen air of the Scotch hills is warrant enough for a second breakfast.'

"I was accordingly whirled to the portal of the cottage, and in a few moments found myself seated at the breakfast-table. There was no one present but the family, which consisted of Mrs. Scott; her eldest

daughter, Sophia, then a fine girl about seventeen ; Miss Ann Scott, two or three years younger ; Walter, a well-grown stripling ; and Charles, a lively boy, eleven or twelve years of age.

"I soon felt myself quite at home, and my heart in a glow, with the cordial welcome I experienced. I had thought to make a mere morning visit, but found I was not to be let off so lightly. 'You must not think our neighbourhood is to be read in a morning like a newspaper,' said Scott ; 'it takes several days of study for an observant traveller, that has a relish for auld-world trumpery. After breakfast you shall make your visit to Melrose Abbey ; I shall not be able to accompany you, as I have some household affairs to attend to ; but I will put you in charge of my son Charles, who is very learned in all things touching the old ruin and the neighbourhood it stands in ; and he and my friend Johnnie Bower, will tell you the whole truth about it, with a great deal more that you are not called upon to believe, unless you be a true and nothing-doubting antiquary. When you come back, I'll take you out on a ramble about the neighbourhood. To-morrow we will take a look at the Yarrow, and the next day we will drive over to Dryburgh Abbey, which is a fine old ruin, well worth your seeing.'—In a word, before Scott had got through with his plan, I found myself committed for a visit of several days, and it seemed as if a little realm of romance was suddenly open before me."

After breakfast, while Scott, no doubt, wrote a chapter of Rob Roy, Mr. Irving, under young Charles's guidance, saw Melrose Abbey and Johnnie Bower the elder, whose son long since inherited his office as showman of the ruins, and all his enthusiasm about them and their poet. The senior on this occasion was loud in his praises of the affability of Scott. "He'll come here sometimes," said he, "with great folks in his company, and the first I'll know of it is hearing his voice calling out Johnny !—Johnny Bower !—and when I go out I'm sure to be greeted with a joke or a pleasant word. He'll stand and crack, an' laugh wi' me just like an auld wife, —and to think that of a man that has such an awfu' knowledge o' history !"

On his return from the Abbey, Irving found Scott ready for a ramble. I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of extracting some parts of his description of it.

"As we sallied forth, every dog in the establishment turned out to attend us. There was the old staghound, Maida, that I have already mentioned, a noble animal, and Hamlet, the black greyhound, a wild thoughtless youngster, not yet arrived at the years of discretion; and Finette, a beautiful setter, with soft, silken hair, long pendant ears, and a mild eye, the parlour favourite. When in front of the house, we were joined by a superannuated greyhound, who came from the kitchen wagging his tail; and was cheered by Scott as an old friend and comrade. In our walks, he would frequently pause in conversation, to notice his dogs, and speak to them as if rational companions; and, indeed, there appears to be a vast deal of rationality in these faithful attendants on man, derived from their close intimacy with him. Maida deported himself with a gravity becoming his age and size, and seemed to consider himself called upon to preserve a great degree of dignity and decorum in our society. As he jogged along a little distance a-head of us, the young dogs would gambol about him, leap on his neck, worry at his ears, and endeavour to tease him into a gambol. The old dog would keep on for a long time with imperturbable solemnity, now and then seeming to rebuke the wantonness of his young companions. At length he would make a sudden turn, seize one of them, and tumble him in the dust, then giving a glance at us, as much as to say, 'You see, gentlemen, I can't help giving way to this nonsense,' would resume his gravity, and jog on as before. Scott amused himself with these peculiarities. 'I make no doubt,' said he, 'when Maida is alone with these young dogs, he throws gravity aside, and plays the boy as much as any of them; but he is ashamed to do so in our company, and seems to say—Ha' done with your nonsense, youngsters: what will the laird and that other gentleman think of me if I give way to such foolery?'

"Scott amused himself with the peculiarities of another of his dogs, a little shamefaced terrier, with

large glassy eyes, one of the most sensitive little bodies to insult and indignity in the world. 'If ever he whipped him,' he said, 'the little fellow would sneak off and hide himself from the light of day in a lumber garret, from whence there was no drawing him forth but by the sound of the chopping-knife, as if chopping up his vic-tuals, when he would steal forth with humiliated and downcast look, but would skulk away again if any one regarded him.'

"While we were discussing the humours and peculiari-ties of our canine companions, some object provoked their spleen, and produced a sharp and petulant barking from the smaller fry; but it was some time before Maida was sufficiently roused to ramp forward two or three bounds, and join the chorus with a deep-mouthed *bow wow*. It was but a transient outbreak, and he returned instantly, wagging his tail, and looking up dubiously in his master's face, uncertain whether he would receive censure or applause. 'Ay, ay, old boy!' cried Scott, 'you have done wonders; you have shaken the Eildon hills with your roaring: you may now lay by your artil-lery for the rest of the day. Maida,' continued he, 'is like the great gun at Constantinople; it takes so long to get it ready, that the smaller guns can fire off a dozen times first: but when it does go off, it plays the very devil.'

"These simple anecdotes may serve to show the de-lightful play of Scott's humours and feelings in private life. His domestic animals were his friends. Every-thing about him seemed to rejoice in the light of his countenance.

"Our ramble took us on the hills commanding an extensive prospect. 'Now,' said Scott, 'I have brought you, like the pilgrim in the Pilgrim's Progress, to the top of the Delectable Mountains, that I may show you all the goodly regions hereabouts. Yonder is Lammer-muir, and Smailholme; and there you have Galashiels, and Torwoodlee, and Gala Water; and in that direction you see Teviotdale and the Braes of Yarrow, and Ettrick stream winding along like a silver thread, to throw itself into the Tweed.' He went on thus to call over names celebrated in Scottish song, and most of which had

recently received a romantic interest from his own pen. In fact, I saw a great part of the Border country spread out before me, and could trace the scenes of those poems and romances which had in a manner bewitched the world.

"I gazed about me for a time with mute surprise, I may almost say with disappointment. I beheld a mere succession of grey waving hills, line beyond line, as far as my eye could reach, monotonous in their aspect, and so destitute of trees, that one could almost see a stout fly walking along their profile; and the far-famed Tweed appeared a naked stream, flowing between bare hills, without a tree or thicket on its banks; and yet such had been the magic web of poetry and romance thrown over the whole, that it had a greater charm for me than the richest scenery I had beheld in England. I could not help giving utterance to my thoughts. Scott hummed for a moment to himself, and looked grave; he had no idea of having his muse complimented at the expense of his native hills. 'It may be pertinacity,' said he at length; 'but to my eye, these grey hills, and all this wild border country, have beauties peculiar to themselves. I like the very nakedness of the land; it has something bold, and stern, and solitary about it. When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, which is like ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back again among my own honest grey hills; and if I did not see the heather, at least once a-year, *I think I should die!*' The last words were said with an honest warmth, accompanied by a thump on the ground with his staff, by way of emphasis, that showed his heart was in his speech. He vindicated the Tweed, too, as a beautiful stream in itself; and observed, that he did not dislike it for being bare of trees, probably from having been much of an angler in his time; and an angler does not like to have a stream overhung by trees, which embarrass him in the exercise of his rod and line.

"I took occasion to plead, in like manner, the associations of early life for my disappointment in respect to the surrounding scenery. I had been so accustomed to see hills crowned with forests, and streams breaking their way through a wilderness of trees, that all my ideas

of romantic landscape were apt to be well wooded. 'Ay, and that's the great charm of your country,' cried Scott. 'You love the forest as I do the heather; but I would not have you think I do not feel the glory of a great woodland prospect. There is nothing I should like more than to be in the midst of one of your grand wild original forests, with the idea of hundreds of miles of untrodden forest around me. I once saw at Leith an immense stick of timber, just landed from America. It must have been an enormous tree when it stood in its native soil, at its full height, and with all its branches. I gazed at it with admiration; it seemed like one of the gigantic obelisks which are now and then brought from Egypt to shame the pigmy monuments of Europe; and, in fact, these vast aboriginal trees, that have sheltered the Indians before the intrusion of the white men, are the monuments and antiquities of your country.'

"The evening having passed away delightfully in a quaint-looking apartment, half study, half drawing-room, Scott read several passages from the old Romance of Arthur, with a fine deep sonorous voice, and a gravity of tone that seemed to suit the antiquated black-letter volume. It was a rich treat to hear such a work read by such a person, and in such a place; and his appearance, as he sat reading, in a large arm-chair, with his favourite hound Maida at his feet, and surrounded by books and reliques, and Border trophies, would have formed an admirable and most characteristic picture. When I retired for the night, I found it almost impossible to sleep: the idea of being under the roof of Scott; of being on the Borders on the Tweed; in the very centre of that region which had, for some time past, been the favourite scene of romantic fiction; and, above all, the recollections of the ramble I had taken, the company in which I had taken it, and the conversation which had passed, all fermented in my mind, and nearly drove sleep from my pillow.

"On the following morning the sun darted his beams from over the hills through the low lattice of my window. I rose at an early hour, and looked out between the branches of eglantine which overhung the casement. To my surprise, Scott was already up, and forth, seated

on a fragment of stone, and chatting with the workmen employed in the new building. I had supposed, after the time he had wasted upon me yesterday, he would be closely occupied this morning : but he appeared like a man of leisure, who had nothing to do but bask in the sunshine, and amuse himself. I soon dressed myself and joined him. He talked about his proposed plans of Abbotsford : happy would it have been for him could he have contented himself with his delightful little vine-covered cottage, and the simple, yet hearty and hospitable, style in which he lived at the time of my visit."

X

MEETING WITH LOCKHART

ILLNESS OF SCOTT

1818-1819

It was during the sitting of the General Assembly of the Kirk in May, 1818, that I [Lockhart] first had the honour of meeting Scott in private society : the party was not a large one, at the house of a much-valued common friend—Mr. Home Drummond of Blair-Drummond, the grandson of Lord Kames. Mr. Scott, ever apt to consider too favourably the literary efforts of others, and more especially of very young persons, received me, when I was presented to him, with a cordiality which I had not been prepared to expect from one filling a station so exalted. This, however, is the same story that every individual, who ever met him under similar circumstances, has had to tell.

A few days after this, I received a communication from the Messrs. Ballantyne, to the effect that Mr. Scott's various avocations had prevented him from fulfilling his agreement with them as to the historical department of the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1816, and that it would be acceptable to him as well as them, if I could undertake to supply it in the course of the

autumn. This proposal was agreed to on my part, and I had consequently occasion to meet him pretty often during that summer session. He told me, that if the war had gone on, he should have liked to do the historical summary as before; but that the prospect of having no events to record but radical riots, and the passing or rejecting of corn bills and poor bills, sickened him; that his health was no longer what it had been; and that though he did not mean to give over writing altogether—(here he smiled significantly, and glanced his eye towards a pile of MS. on the desk by him)—he thought himself now entitled to write nothing but what would rather be an amusement than a fatigue to him—“*Juniores ad labores.*”

The accounts of Scott's condition circulated in Edinburgh in the course of April [1819] were so alarming, that I should not have thought of accepting his invitation to revisit Abbotsford, unless John Ballantyne had given me better tidings about the end of the month. He informed me that his “illustrious friend” (for so both the Ballantynes usually spoke of him) was so much recovered as to have resumed his usual literary tasks, though with this difference, that he now, for the first time in his life, found it necessary to employ the hand of another. I have now before me a letter of the 8th April, in which Scott says to Constable—“Yesterday I began to dictate, and did it easily and with comfort. This is a great point—but I must proceed by little and little; last night I had a slight return of the enemy—but baffled him;”—and he again writes to the bookseller on the 11th—“John Ballantyne is here, and returns with copy, which my increasing strength permits me to hope I may now furnish regularly.”

The *copy* (as MS. for the press is technically called) which Scott was thus dictating, was that of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, and his amanuenses were William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne;—of whom he preferred the latter, when he could be at Abbotsford, on account of the superior rapidity of his pen; and also because John kept his pen to the paper without interruption, and, though with many an arch twinkle in his eyes, and now and then an audible smack of his lips, had resolution to

work on like a well-trained clerk; whereas good Laidlaw entered with such keen zest into the interest of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—"Gude keep us a'!—the like o' that!—eh sirs! eh sirs!"—and so forth—which did not promote despatch. I have often, however, in the sequel, heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment. The affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause, "Nay, Willie," he answered, "only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves; but as to giving over work, that can only be when I am in woollen." John Ballantyne told me, that after the first day, he always took care to have a dozen of pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself on his pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath. But when dialogue of peculiar animation was in progress, spirit seemed to triumph altogether over matter—he arose from his couch and walked up and down the room, raising and lowering his voice, and as it were acting the parts. It was in this fashion that Scott produced the far greater portion of *The Bride of Lammermoor*—the whole of the *Legend of Montrose*—and almost the whole of *Ivanhoe*. Yet, when his health was fairly reëstablished, he disdained to avail himself of the power of dictation, which he had thus put to the sharpest test, but resumed, and for many years resolutely adhered to, the old plan of writing everything with his own hand. When I once, sometime afterwards, expressed my surprise that he did not consult his ease, and spare his eyesight at all events, by occasionally dictating, he answered—"I should as soon think of getting into a sedan chair while I can use my legs."

On the 11th of May, Scott returned to Edinburgh, and was present next day at the opening of the Court of Session; when all who saw him were as much struck as I had been at Abbotsford with the lamentable change his illness had produced in his appearance. He was unable

to persist in attendance at the Clerk's table—for several weeks afterwards I think he seldom if ever attempted it;—and I well remember that, when the Third Series of the Tales of My Landlord at length came out (which was on the 10th of June), he was known to be confined to bed, and the book was received amidst the deep general impression that we should see no more of that parentage.

"The book" (says James Ballantyne) "was not only written but published, before Mr. Scott was able to rise from his bed; and he assured me, that when it was first put into his hands in a complete shape, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained! He did not desire me to understand, nor did I understand, that his illness had erased from his memory the original incidents of the story, with which he had been acquainted from his boyhood. These remained rooted where they had ever been; or, to speak more explicitly, he remembered the general facts of the existence of the father and mother, of the son and daughter, of the rival lovers, of the compulsory marriage, and the attack made by the bride upon the hapless bridegroom, with the general catastrophe of the whole. All these things he recollected just as he did before he took to his bed: but he literally recollected nothing else—not a single character woven by the romancer, not one of the many scenes and points of humour, nor anything with which he was connected as the writer of the work. 'For a long time,' he said, 'I felt myself very uneasy in the course of my reading, lest I should be startled by meeting something altogether glaring and fantastic. However, I recollected that you had been the printer, and I felt sure that you would not have permitted anything of this sort to pass.' 'Well,' I said, 'upon the whole, how did you like it?'—'Why,' he said, 'as a whole, I felt it monstrous gross and grotesque; but still the worst of it made me laugh, and I trusted the good-natured public would not be less indulgent.' I do not think I ever ventured to lead to the discussion of this singular phenomenon again; but you may depend upon it, that what I have now said is as distinctly reported as if it had been taken down in short-hand at the moment; I should not otherwise have ventured to allude to the

matter at all. I believe you will agree with me in thinking that the history of the human mind contains nothing more wonderful."

XI

"IVANHOE." LIFE AT ABBOTSFORD

1819

THE publication of *Ivanhoe* [1819] marks the most brilliant epoch in Scott's history as the literary favourite of his contemporaries. With the novel which he next put forth, the immediate sale of these works began gradually to decline; and though, even when that had reached its lowest declension it was still far above the most ambitious dreams of any other novelist, yet the publishers were afraid the announcement of anything like a falling-off might cast a damp over the spirits of the author. He was allowed to remain, for several years, under the impression that whatever novel he threw off commanded at once the old triumphant sale of ten or twelve thousand, and was afterwards, when included in the collective edition, to be circulated in that shape also as widely as *Waverley* or *Ivanhoe*. In my opinion, it would have been very unwise in the booksellers to give Scott any unfavourable tidings upon such subjects after the commencement of the malady which proved fatal to him,—for that from the first shook his mind; but I think they took a false measure of the man when they hesitated to tell him exactly how the matter stood, throughout 1820 and the three or four following years, when his intellect was as vigorous as it ever had been, and his heart as courageous; and I regret their scruples (among other reasons), because the years now mentioned were the most costly ones in his life; and for every twelvemonth in which any man allows himself, or is encouraged by others, to proceed in a course of unwise expenditure, it becomes proportionably more difficult for him to pull up when the mistake is at length detected or recognised.

About the middle of February [1820]—it having been ere that time arranged that I should marry his eldest daughter in the course of the spring,—I accompanied him and part of his family on one of those flying visits to Abbotsford, with which he often indulged himself on a Saturday during term. Upon such occasions Scott appeared at the usual hour in Court, but wearing, instead of the official suit of black, his country morning dress—green jacket and so forth—under the clerk's gown; a licence of which many gentlemen of the long robe had been accustomed to avail themselves in the days of his youth—it being then considered as the authentic badge that they were lairds as well as lawyers—but which, to use the dialect of the place, had fallen into *desuetude* before I knew the Parliament House. He was, I think, one of the two or three, or at most the half-dozen, who still adhered to this privilege of their order; and it has now, in all likelihood, become quite obsolete, like the ancient custom, a part of the same system, for all Scotch barristers to appear without gowns or wigs, and in coloured clothes, when upon circuit. At noon, when the Court broke up, Peter Mathieson was sure to be in attendance in the Parliament Close, and five minutes after, the gown had been tossed off, and Scott, rubbing his hands for glee, was under weigh for Tweedside. On this occasion, he was, of course, in mourning [for his mother]; but I have thought it worth while to preserve the circumstance of his usual Saturday's costume. As we proceeded, he talked without reserve of the novel of the Monastery, of which he had the first volume with him: and mentioned, what he had probably forgotten when he wrote the Introduction of 1830, that a good deal of that volume had been composed before he concluded *Ivanhoe*. "It was a relief," he said, "to interlay the scenery most familiar to me, with the strange world for which I had to draw so much on imagination."

Next morning there appeared at breakfast John Ballantyne, who had at this time a shooting or hunting-box a few miles off, in the vale of the Leader—and with him Mr. Constable, his guest; and it being a fine clear day, as soon as Scott had read the Church service and one of Jeremy Taylor's sermons, we all sallied out,

before noon, on a perambulation of his upland territories; Maida and the rest of the favourites accompanying our march. At starting we were joined by the constant henchman, Tom Purdie—and I may save myself the trouble of any attempt to describe his appearance, for his master has given us an inimitably true one in introducing a certain personage of his Redgauntlet:—“He was, perhaps, sixty years old; yet his brow was not much furrowed, and his jet black hair was only grizzled, not whitened, by the advance of age. All his motions spoke strength unabated; and though rather undersized, he had very broad shoulders, was square made, thin-flanked, and apparently combined in his frame muscular strength and activity; the last somewhat impaired, perhaps, by years, but the first remaining in full vigour. A hard and harsh countenance; eyes far sunk under projecting eye-brows, which were grizzled like his hair; a wide mouth, furnished from ear to ear with a range of unimpaired teeth of uncommon whiteness, and a size and breadth which might have become the jaws of an ogre, completed this delightful portrait.” Equip this figure in Scott’s cast-off green jacket, white hat and drab trousers; and imagine that years of kind treatment, comfort, and the honest consequence of a confidential *grieve*, had softened away much of the hardness and harshness originally impressed on the visage by anxious penury and the sinister habits of a *black-fisher*;—and the Tom Purdie of 1820 stands before us.

We were all delighted to see how completely Scott had recovered his bodily vigour, and none more so than Constable, who, as he puffed and panted after him up one ravine and down another, often stopped to wipe his forehead, and remarked that “it was not every author who should lead him such a dance.” But Purdie’s face shone with rapture as he observed how severely the bookseller’s activity was taxed. Scott exclaiming exultingly, though perhaps for the tenth time, “This will be a glorious spring for our trees, Tom!”—“You may say that, Shirra,” quoth Tom,—and then lingering a moment for Constable—“My certy,” he added, scratching his head, “and I think it will be a grand season for *our buiks* too.” But indeed Tom always talked of *our buiks*

as if they had been as regular products of the soil as *our aits* and *our birks*. Having threaded, first the Hexilcleugh, and then the Rhymer's Glen, we arrived at Huntly Burn, where the hospitality of the kind *Weird-Sisters*, as Scott called the Miss Fergussons, reanimated our exhausted Bibliopoles, and gave them courage to extend their walk a little further down the same famous brook. Here there was a small cottage in a very sequestered situation, by making some little additions to which Scott thought it might be converted into a suitable summer residence for his daughter and future son-in-law. The details of that plan were soon settled—it was agreed on all hands that a sweeter scene of seclusion could not be fancied. He repeated some verses of Rogers' "Wish," which paint the spot:—

"Mine be a cot beside the hill—
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willowy brook that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near:" etc.

But when he came to the stanza—

"And Lucy at her wheel shall sing,
In russet-gown and apron blue,"

he departed from the text, adding—

"But if Bluestockings here you bring,
The Great Unknown won't dine with you."

As we walked homeward, Scott, being a little fatigued, laid his left hand on Tom's shoulder, and leaned heavily for support, chatting to his "Sunday pony," as he called the affectionate fellow, just as freely as with the rest of the party, and Tom put in his word shrewdly and manfully, and grinned and grunted whenever the joke chanced to be within his apprehension. It was easy to see that his heart swelled within him from the moment that the Sheriff got his collar in his grip.

There arose a little dispute between them about what tree or trees ought to be cut down in a hedgerow that we passed; and Scott seemed somewhat ruffled with finding that some previous hints of his on that head had not been attended to. When we got into motion again, his hand was on Constable's shoulder—and Tom dropped a pace or two to the rear, until we approached a

gate, when he jumped forward and opened it. "Give us a pinch of your snuff, Tom," quoth the Sheriff—Tom's mull was produced, and the hand resumed its position. I was much diverted with Tom's behaviour when we at length reached Abbotsford. There were some garden chairs on the green in front of the cottage porch. Scott sat down on one of them to enjoy the view of his new tower as it gleamed in the sunset, and Constable and I did the like. Mr. Purdie remained lounging near us for a few minutes, and then asked the Sheriff "to speak a word." They withdrew together into the garden—and Scott presently rejoined us with a particularly comical expression of face. As soon as Tom was out of sight, he said—"Will ye guess what he has been saying, now?—Well, this is a great satisfaction! Tom assures me that he has thought the matter over, and *will take my advice* about the thinning of that clump behind Captain Fergusson's."

I must not forget that, whoever might be at Abbotsford, Tom always appeared at his master's elbow on Sunday, when dinner was over, and drank long life to the Laird and Lady and all the good company, in a quaiigh of whisky, or a tumbler of wine, according to his fancy. I believe Scott has somewhere expressed in print his satisfaction that, among all the changes of our manners, the ancient freedom of personal intercourse may still be indulged between a master and an *out-of-doors*' servant; but in truth he kept by the old fashion even with domestic servants, to an extent which I have hardly seen practised by any other gentleman. He conversed with his coachman if he sat by him, as he often did on the box—with his footman, if he happened to be in the rumble; and when there was any very young lad in the household, he held it a point of duty to see that his employments were so arranged as to leave time for advancing his education, made him bring his copy-book once a-week to the library, and examined him as to all that he was doing. Indeed he did not confine this humanity to his own people. Any steady servant of a friend of his was soon considered as a sort of friend too, and was sure to have a kind little colloquy to himself at coming and going. With all this, Scott was a very

rigid enforcer of discipline—contrived to make it thoroughly understood by all about him, that they must do their part by him as he did his by them; and the result was happy. I never knew any man so well served as he was—so carefully, so respectfully, and so silently; and I cannot help doubting if, in any department of human operations, real kindness ever compromised real dignity.

XII

LIFE AT ABBOTSFORD AND CHIEFSWOOD

1820-1821

[Scott was created a Baronet in 1820: in the same year Lockhart named Scott's daughter Sophia.]

ABOUT the middle of August [1820], my wife and I went to Abbotsford; and we remained there for several weeks, during which I became familiarized to Sir Walter Scott's mode of existence in the country. It was necessary to observe it, day after day for a considerable period, before one could believe that such was, during nearly half the year, the routine of life with the most productive author of his age. The humblest person who stayed merely for a short visit, must have departed with the impression that what he witnessed was an occasional variety; that Scott's courtesy prompted him to break in upon his habits when he had a stranger to amuse; but that it was physically impossible that the man who was writing the *Waverley* romances at the rate of nearly twelve volumes in the year, could continue, week after week, and month after month, to devote all but a hardly perceptible fraction of his mornings to out-of-doors' occupations, and the whole of his evenings to the entertainment of a constantly varying circle of guests.

I remember saying to William Allan one morning as the whole party mustered before the porch after breakfast—"A faithful sketch of what you at this moment see, would be more interesting a hundred years hence, than the grandest so-called historical picture that you

will ever exhibit at Somerset-House;" and my friend agreed with me so cordially, that I often wondered afterwards he had not attempted to realize the suggestion. The subject ought, however, to have been treated conjointly by him (or Wilkie) and Edwin Landseer. It was a clear, bright September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine, and all was in readiness for a grand coursing-match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked out other sport for himself was the stanchest of anglers, Mr. Rose;—but he, too, was there on his *shelly*, armed with his salmon-rod and landing-net, and attended by his humorous squire Hinves, and Charlie Purdie, a brother of Tom, in those days the most celebrated fisherman of the district. This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sybil, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphry Davy, Dr. Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres, Henry Mackenzie. The Man of Feeling, however, was persuaded with some difficulty to resign his steed for the present to his faithful negro follower, and to join Lady Scott in the sociable, until we should reach the ground of our *battue*. Laidlaw, on a long-tailed wiry Highlander, yclept *Hoddin Grey*, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground as he sat, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this, but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought; and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brims, surrounded with line upon line, and innumerable fly-hooks—jack-boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made

a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white-cord breeches, and well polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr. Wollaston was in black, and with his noble serene dignity of countenance might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr Mackenzie, at this time in the 76th year of his age, with a white hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-whistle round his neck, and had all over the air of as resolute a devotee as the gay Captain of Huntly Burn. Tom Purdie and his subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the greyhounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sibyl Grey, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

I have seen Sir Humphry in many places, and in company of many different descriptions; but never to such advantage as at Abbotsford. His host and he delighted in each other, and the modesty of their mutual admiration was a memorable spectacle. Davy was by nature a poet—and Scott, though anything but a philosopher in the modern sense of that term, might, I think it very likely, have pursued the study of physical science with zeal and success, had he happened to fall in with such an instructor as Sir Humphry would have been to him, in his early life. Each strove to make the other talk—and they did so in turn more charmingly than I ever heard either on any other occasion whatsoever. I remember William Laidlaw whispering to me, one night, when their "rapt talk" had kept the circle round the fire until long after the usual bedtime of Abbotsford—"Gude preserve us! this is a very superior occasion! Eh, sirs!" he added, cocking his eye like a bird, "I wonder if Shakspeare and Bacon ever met to screw ilk other up?"

Since I have touched on the subject of Sir Walter's autumnal diversions in these his latter years, I may as well notice here two annual festivals, when sport was made his pretext for assembling his rural neighbours about him—days eagerly anticipated, and fondly remembered by many. One was a solemn bout of salmon-

shing for the neighbouring gentry and their families, instituted originally, I believe, by Lord Somerville, but now, in his absence, conducted and presided over by the heriff. Charles Purdie, already mentioned, had charge (partly as lessee) of the salmon-fisheries for three or four miles of the Tweed, including all the water attached to the lands of Abbotsford, Gala, and Allwyn; and this festival had been established with a view, besides other considerations, of recompensing him for the attention he always bestowed on any of the lairds or their visitors that chose to fish, either from the banks or the boat, within his jurisdiction. His selection of the day, and other precautions, generally secured an abundance of sport for the great anniversary; and then the whole party assembled to regale on the newly caught prey, boiled, grilled, and roasted in every variety of preparation, beneath a grand old ash, adjoining Charlie's cottage at Boldside, on the northern margin of the Tweed, about a mile above Abbotsford. This banquet took place earlier in the day or later, according to circumstances; but it often lasted till the harvest moon shone on the lovely scene and its revellers.

The other "superior occasion" came later in the season; the 28th of October, the birthday of Sir Walter's eldest son, was, I think, that usually selected for the *Abbotsford Hunt*. This was a coursing-field on a large scale, including, with as many of the young gentry as pleased to attend, all Scott's personal favourites among the yeomen and farmers of the surrounding country. The Sheriff always took the field, but latterly devolved the command upon his good friend Mr. John Usher, the ex-laird of Toftfield; and he could not have had a more skilful or a better-humoured lieutenant. The hunt took place either on the moors above the Cauldshields Loch, or over some of the hills on the estate of Gala, and we had commonly, ere we returned, hares enough to supply the wife of every farmer that attended, with *soup* for a week following. The whole then dined at Abbotsford, the Sheriff in the chair, Adam Fergusson croupier, and Dominie Thomson, of course, chaplain. George, by the way, was himself an eager partaker in the preliminary sport; and now he would

favour us with a grace, in Burns's phrase; "as long as my arm," beginning with thanks to the Almighty, who had given man dominion over the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and expatiating on this text with so luculent a commentary, that Scott, who had been fumbling with his spoon long before he reached his Amen, could not help exclaiming as he sat down, "Well done, Mr. George! I think we've had everything but the view holla!" The company, whose onset had been thus deferred, were seldom, I think, under thirty in number, and sometimes they exceeded forty. The feast was such as suited the occasion—a baron of beef, roasted, at the foot of the table, a salted round at the head, while tureens of hare-soup, hotchpotch, and cockeyeleekie, extended down the centre, and such light articles as geese, turkeys, entire sucking-pigs, a singed sheep's head, and the unfailing haggis, were set forth by way of side-dishes. Blackcock and moorfowl, bushels of snipe, *black puddings*, *white puddings*, and pyramids of pancakes, formed the second course. Ale was the favourite beverage during dinner, but there was plenty of port and sherry for those whose stomachs they suited. The quaighs of Glenlivet were filled brimful, and tossed off as if they held water. The wine decanters made a few rounds of the table, but the hints for hot punch and toddy soon became clamorous. Two or three bowls were introduced, and placed under the supervision of experienced manufacturers—one of these being usually the Ettrick Shepherd—and then the business of the evening commenced in good earnest. The faces shone and glowed like those at Camacho's wedding: the chairman told his richest stories of old rural life, Lowland or Highland; Fergusson and humbler heroes fought their peninsular battles o'er again; the stalwart Dandie Dinmonts lugged out their last winter's snow-storm, the parish scandal, perhaps, or the dexterous bargain of the Northumberland *tryste*; and every man was knocked down for the song that he sung best or took most pleasure in singing.

Imagine some smart Parisian *savant*—some dreamy pedant of Halle or Heidelberg—a brace of stray young Lords from Oxford or Cambridge, or perhaps their prim

college tutors, planted here and there amidst these rustic wassailers—this being their first vision of the author of *Marmion* and *Ivanhoe*, and he appearing as heartily at home in the scene as if he had been a veritable *Dandie* himself—his face radiant, his laugh gay as childhood, his chorus always ready. And so it proceeded until some worthy, who had fifteen or twenty miles to ride home, began to insinuate that his wife and bairns would be getting sorely anxious about the fords, and the Dumbles and Hoddins were at last heard neighing at the gate, and it was voted that the hour had come for *doch an dorrach*—the stirrup-cup—to wit, a bumper all round of the unmitigated *mountain dew*. How they all contrived to get home in safety, Heaven only knows—but I never heard of any serious accident except upon one occasion, when James Hogg made a bet at starting that he would leap over his wall-eyed pony as she stood, and broke his nose in this experiment of “o’ervaulting ambition.” One comely goodwife, far off among the hills, amused Sir Walter by telling him, the next time he passed her homestead after one of these jolly doings, what her husband’s first words were when he alighted at his own door—“Ailie, my woman, I’m ready for my bed—and oh lass (he gallantly added), I wish I could sleep for a towmont, for there’s only ae thing in this warld worth living for, and that’s the Abbotsford hunt!”

XIII

THE KING'S VISIT TO EDINBURGH

1822

ON the 12th of July [1821], Sir Walter, as usual, left Edinburgh, but he was recalled within a week, by the business to which the following note refers—

“To D. Terry, Esq., London.

“Edinburgh, 31st July, 1822.

“My Dear Terry,—I have not a moment to think my own thoughts, or mind my own matters. Would you

were here, for we are in a famous perplexity : the motto on the St. Andrew's Cross, to be presented to the King, is '*Rìgh Albainn gu brath*,' that is, 'Long Life to the King of Scotland.' '*Rìgh gu brath*' would make a good motto for a button—'The King for ever.' I wish to have Montrose's sword down with the speed of light, as I have promised to let my cousin, the Knight-Marshal, have it on this occasion. Pray send it down by the mail-coach : I can add no more, for the whole of this work has devolved on my shoulders. If Montrose's sword is not quite finished, send it nevertheless.—Yours entirely,
"W. SCOTT."

We have him here in the hot bustle of preparation for King George the Fourth's reception in Scotland, where his Majesty spent a fortnight in the ensuing August, as he had a similar period in Ireland the year before, immediately after his coronation. Before this time no Prince of the House of Hanover was known to have touched the soil of Scotland, except one, whose name had ever been held there in universal detestation—the cruel conqueror of Culloden,—“the butcher Cumberland.”

On the whole it was, in the opinion of cool observers, a very doubtful experiment, which the new, but not young King, had resolved on trying. That he had been moved to do so in a very great measure, both directly and indirectly, by Scott, there can be no question ; and I believe it will now be granted by all who can recall the particulars as they occurred, that his Majesty mainly owed to Scott's personal influence, authority, and zeal, the more than full realization of the highest hopes he could have indulged on the occasion of this northern progress.

About noon of the 14th of August, the royal yacht and the attendant vessels of war cast anchor in the Roads of Leith ; but although Scott's ballad-prologue had entreated the clergy to “warstle for a sunny day,” the weather was so unpropitious that it was found necessary to defer the landing until the 15th. In the midst of the rain, however, Sir Walter rowed off to the Royal George ; and, says the newspaper of the day,—

“When his arrival alongside the yacht was announced

to the King.—‘What!’ exclaimed his Majesty, ‘Sir Walter Scott!—The man in Scotland I most wish to see! Let him come up.’ This distinguished Baronet then ascended the ship, and was presented to the King on the quarter-deck, where, after an appropriate speech in name of the Ladies of Edinburgh, he presented his Majesty with a St. Andrew’s Cross in silver, which his fair subjects had provided for him. The King, with evident marks of satisfaction, made a gracious reply to Sir Walter, received the gift in the most kind and condescending manner, and promised to wear it in public, in token of acknowledgment to the fair donors.”

To this record let me add, that, on receiving the Poet on the quarter-deck, his Majesty called for a bottle of Highland whisky, and having drunk his health in this national liquor, desired a glass to be filled for him. Sir Walter, after draining his own bumper, made a request that the King would condescend to bestow on him the glass out of which his Majesty had just drunk his health; and this being granted, the precious vessel was immediately wrapped up and carefully deposited in what he conceived to be the safest part of his dress. So he returned with it to Castle Street; but—to say nothing at this moment of graver distractions—on reaching his house he found a guest established there of a sort rather different from the usual visitors of the time. The poet Crabbe, to whom he had been introduced, when last in London, by Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street, after repeatedly promising to follow up the acquaintance by an excursion to the north, had at last arrived in the midst of these tumultuous preparations for the royal advent. Notwithstanding all such impediments, he found his quarters ready for him, and Scott entering wet and hurried, embraced the venerable man with brotherly affection. The royal gift was forgotten—the ample skirt of the coat within which it had been packed and which he had hitherto held cautiously in front of his person, slipped back to its more usual position—he sat down beside Crabbe, and the glass was crushed to atoms. His scream and gesture made his wife conclude that he had sat down on a pair of scissors or the like: but very little harm had been done except th

breaking of the glass, of which alone he had been thinking. This was a damage not to be repaired : as for the scratch that accompanied it, its scar was of no great consequence.

The King took up his residence, during his stay in his northern dominions, at Dalkeith Palace, a noble seat of the Buccleuch family, within six miles of Edinburgh; and here his dinner party almost daily included Sir Walter Scott, who, however, appeared to have derived more deep-felt gratification from his Majesty's kind and paternal attention to his juvenile host (the Duke of Buccleuch was at that time only in his sixteenth year), than from all the flattering condescension he lavished on himself. From Dalkeith the King repaired to Holyroodhouse two or three times, for the purposes of a levee or drawing-room. One Sunday he attended divine service in the Cathedral of St. Giles', when the decorum and silence preserved by the multitudes in the streets, struck him as a most remarkable contrast to the rapturous excitement of his reception on week days; and the scene was not less noticeable in the eyes of Crabbe, who says in his Journal—"The silence of Edinburgh on the Sunday is in itself devout."

On the eve of the King's departure, Scott received the following communication :

"To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., etc., etc., Castle Street.

"Edinburgh, August 28, 1822.

"My Dear Sir,—The King has commanded me to acquaint you, that he cannot bid adieu to Scotland without conveying to you individually his warm personal acknowledgments for the deep interest you have taken in every ceremony and arrangement connected with his Majesty's visit, and for your ample contributions to their complete success.

"His Majesty well knows how many difficulties have been smoothed, and how much has been effected by your unremitting activity, by your knowledge of your countrymen, and by the just estimation in which they hold you.

"The King wishes to make you the channel of con-

veying to the Highland chiefs and their followers, who have given to the varied scene which we have witnessed so peculiar and romantic a character, his particular thanks for their attendance, and his warm approbation of their uniform deportment. He does justice to the ardent spirit of loyalty by which they are animated, and is convinced that he could offer no recompense for their services so gratifying to them as the assurance, which I now convey, of the esteem and approbation of their Sovereign.

"I have the honour to be, my dear Sir, with great truth, most truly and faithfully yours,

"ROBERT PEEL."

XIV

VISIT OF MARIA EDGEWORTH. "THE WALLACE CHAIR"

1823-1824

THE next month—August, 1823—was one of the happiest in Scott's Life. Never did I see a brighter day at Abbotsford than that on which Miss Edgeworth first arrived there—never can I forget her look and accent when she was received by him at his archway, and exclaimed, "Everything about you is exactly what one ought to have had wit enough to dream!" The weather was beautiful, and the edifice, and its appurtenances, were all but complete; and day after day, so long as she could remain, her host had always some new plan of gaiety. One day there was fishing on the Cauldshields Loch, and a dinner on the heathy bank. Another, the whole party feasted by Thomas the Rhymer's waterfall in the glen—and the stone on which Maria that day sat was ever afterwards called *Edgeworth's stone*. A third day we had to go further a-field. He must needs show her, not Newark only, but all the upper scenery of the Yarrow, where "fair hangs the apple frae the rock,"—and the baskets were unpacked about sunset, beside the ruined Chapel overlooking St.

Mary's Loch—and he had scrambled to gather bluebells and heath-flowers, with which all the young ladies must twine their hair,—and they sang, and he recited, until it was time to go home beneath the softest of harvest moons. Thus a fortnight was passed—and the vision closed; for Miss Edgeworth never saw Abbotsford again during his life; and I am very sure she could never bear to look upon it now that the spirit is fled.

The arrangement of his library and museum was the main care of the summer months of this year; and his woods were now in such a state of progress that his most usual exercise out of doors was thinning them. He was an expert as well as powerful wielder of the axe, and competed with his ablest subalterns as to the paucity of blows by which a tree could be brought down. The wood rang ever and anon with laughter while he shared their labours; and if he had taken, as he every now and then did, a whole day with them, they were sure to be invited home to Abbotsford to sup gaily at Tom Purdie's.

Meantime, the progress of Abbotsford stimulated largely both friends and strangers to contribute articles of curiosity towards its final adornment. I have mentioned Mr. Train, the affectionate Supervisor of Excise, as the most unwearied and bountiful of all the contributors to the *Museum*. Now, he would fain have his part in the substantial "*plenishing*" also; and I transcribe, as a specimen of his zeal, the account which I have received from himself of the preparation and transmission of one piece of furniture, to which his friend allotted a distinguished place, for it was one of the *two* chairs that ultimately stood in his own *sanctum sanctorum*. In those days, Mr. Train's official residence was at Kirkintilloch, in Stirlingshire; and he says, in his *Memoranda*,—

"Rarbiston, or, as it is now called, Robroyston, where the valiant Wallace was betrayed by Monteith of Ruskie, is only a few miles distant from Kirkintilloch. The walls of the house where the first scene of that disgraceful tragedy was acted, were standing on my arrival in that quarter. The roof was entirely gone; but I observed that some butts of the rafters, built into

the wall, were still remaining. As the ruin was about being taken down to make way for the ploughshare, I easily succeeded in purchasing these old stumps from the farmer upon whose ground it stood. When taken out of the building, these pieces of wood were seemingly so much decayed as to be fit only for fuel; but after planing off about an inch from the surface, I found that the remainder of the wood was as hard as a bone, and susceptible of a fine polish. I then resolved upon having a chair of the most antique description made out of these wasted blocks, as a memorial of our most patriotic hero, with a feeling somewhat similar to theirs who remember their Saviour in the crucifix.

"In the execution of this undertaking, workmen of various denominations were employed. It was modelled from an old chair in the Palace of Hamilton, and is nearly covered with carved work, representing rocks, heather, and thistles, emblematic of Scotland, and indented with brass, representing the *Harp of the North*, surrounded with laurels, and supported by targets, claymores, Lochaber axes, war horns, etc. The seat is covered with silk velvet, beneath which is a drawer, containing a book bound in the most primitive form in Robroyston wood, with large clasps. In this book are detailed at length some of the particulars here briefly alluded to, with the affirmations of several persons to whose care the chair was entrusted in the course of making.

"On the (inside) back of the chair is a brass plate, bearing the following inscription:

THIS CHAIR,
MADE OF THE ONLY REMAINING WOOD
OF THE
HOUSE AT ROBROYSTON,
IN WHICH THE
MATCHLESS SIR WILLIAM WALLACE
'WAS DONE TO DEATH BY FELON HAND
FOR GUARDING WELL HIS FATHERS' LAND,'
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY PRESENTED TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT,
AS A SMALL TOKEN OF GRATITUDE,
BY HIS DEVOTED SERVANT,
JOSEPH TRAIN

"Exaggerated reports of this chair spread over the adjacent country with a fiery-cross-like speed, and raised public curiosity to such a height, that persons in their own carriages came many miles to see it. I happened to be in a distant part of my district at the time; but I daresay many persons in Kirkintilloch yet remember how triumphantly the symbolic chair was borne from my lodgings to the bank of the Great Canal, to be there shipped for Abbotsford, in the midst of the town-band playing 'Scot's wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' and surrounded by thousands, who made the welkin resound with bursts of national enthusiasm, justifying the couplet of Pope—

'All this may be, the people's voice is odd;
The Scots will fight for Wallace as for God.'

Such arrivals as that of "the Wallace Chair" were frequent throughout 1824. It was a happy, and therefore it need hardly be added an ineventful year—his last year of undisturbed prosperity.

Within, I think, the same week in January, arrived a copy of Montfauçon's *Antiquities*, in fifteen volumes folio, richly bound in scarlet, the gift of King George IV., and a set of the *Variorum Classics*, in a hundred and forty volumes octavo, from Mr. Constable. Sir Walter says—

"To Archibald Constable, Esq.

"Abbotsford, 6th January, 1824.

"My Dear Sir,—Yesterday I had the great pleasure of placing in my provisional library the most splendid present, as I in sincerity believe, which ever an author received from a bookseller. In the shape of these inimitable *Variorums*, who knows what new ideas the Classics may suggest?—for I am determined to shake off the rust which years have contracted, and to read at least some of the most capital of the ancients before I die. Believe me, my dear and old friend, I set a more especial value on this work as coming from you, and as being a pledge that the long and confidential intercourse betwixt us has been agreeable and advantageous to both.—Yours truly,

XV

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN
BASIL HALL

1824-1825

ABBOTSFORD was at last finished, and in all its splendour; and at Christmas, a larger party than the house could ever before have accommodated, were assembled there. Among the guests was one who kept a copious journal during his stay, and has kindly furnished me with a copy of it. I shall, therefore, extract such passages as bear immediately upon Sir Walter Scott himself, who certainly was never subjected to sharper observation than that of his ingenious friend Captain Basil Hall.

EXTRACTS FROM CAPTAIN HALL'S JOURNAL

"Abbotsford, December 29, 1824.

"This morning my brother James and I set out from Edinburgh in the Blucher coach at eight o'clock, and although we heard of snow-storms on the hills, we bowled along without the smallest impediment, and with a fine bright sun and cheerful green fields around us, with only here and there a distant streak of snow in some shady ravine. We arrived in good time—and found several other guests at dinner. . . .

"The public rooms are lighted with oil-gas in a style of extraordinary splendour. The passages, also, and the bedrooms, are lighted in a similar manner. The whole establishment is on the same footing—I mean the attendance and entertainment—all is in good order, and an air of punctuality and method, without any waste or ostentation, pervades everything. Every one seems at his ease; and although I have been in some big houses in my time, and amongst good folks who studied these sort of points not a little, I don't remember to have anywhere met with things better managed in all respects.

"Had I a hundred pens, each of which at the same time should separately write down an anecdote, I could not hope to record one half of those which our host, to use Spenser's expression, 'welled out alway.' To write down one or two, or one or two dozen, would serve no purpose, as they were all appropriate to the moment, and were told with a tone, gesture, and look, suited exactly to the circumstances, but which it is of course impossible in the least degree to describe.

"Abbotsford, 30th December.

"This morning Major Stisted, my brother, and I, accompanied Sir Walter Scott on a walk over his grounds, a distance of five or six miles. He led us through his plantations, which are in all stages of advancement, and entertained us all the way with an endless string of anecdotes, more or less characteristic of the scenes we were passing through. Occasionally he repeated snatches of songs, sometimes a whole ballad, and at other times he planted his staff in the ground and related some tale to us, which, though not in verse, came like a stream of poetry from his lips. Thus, about the middle of our walk, we had first to cross, and then to wind down the banks of the Huntly Burn, the scene of old Thomas the Rhymer's interview with the Queen of the Fairies. Before entering this little glen, he detained us on the heath above till he had related the whole of that romantic story, so that by the time we descended the path, our imaginations were so worked upon by the wild nature of the fiction, and still more by the animation of the narrator, that we felt ourselves treading upon classical ground; and though the day was cold, the path muddy and scarcely passable, owing to the late floods, and the trees all bare, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine, which in any other company would have seemed quite insignificant.

"On reaching an elevated point near a wild mountain lake, from whence we commanded a view of many different parts of his estate, and saw the progress of his improvements, I remarked that it must be interesting

to engage in planting. 'Interesting!' he cried; 'You can have no idea of the exquisite delight of a planter—he is like a painter laying on his colours—at every moment he sees his effects coming out. There is no art or occupation comparable to this; it is full of past, present, and future enjoyment. I look back to the time when there was not a tree here, only bare heath; I look round and see thousands of trees growing up, all of which, I may say almost each of which, have received my personal attention. I remember five years ago looking forward, with the most delighted expectation, to this very hour, and as each year has passed, the expectation has gone on increasing. I do the same now: I anticipate what this plantation and that one will presently be, if only taken care of, and there is not a spot of which I do not watch the progress. Unlike building, or even painting, or indeed any other kind of pursuit, this has no end, and is never interrupted, but goes on from day to day, and from year to year, with a perpetually augmenting interest. Farming I hate; what have I to do with fattening and killing beasts, or raising corn only to cut it down, and to wrangle with farmers about prices, and to be constantly at the mercy of the seasons? There can be no such disappointments or annoyances in planting trees.'

"Abbotsford, 7th January, 1825.

"In the evening there was a dance in honour of Sir Walter Scott's eldest son, who had recently come from Sandhurst College, after having passed through some military examinations with great credit.

"We had a great clan of Scotts. There were no less than nine Scotts of Harden, and ten of other families. There were others besides from the neighbourhood—at least half-a-dozen Fergussons, with the jolly Sir Adam at their head—Lady Fergusson, her niece Miss Jobson, the pretty heiress of Lochore, etc., etc., etc. . . .

"Abbotsford, 8th January.

"It is wonderful how many people a house can be made to hold upon occasions such as this; and when,

in the course of the morning, the neighbours came to stream off to their respective homes, one stared, like the man in the Arabian Nights who uncorked the genie, thinking how the deuce they ever got in. There were a few who stayed a while to saunter about the dressed grounds, under the guidance of Sir Walter; but by one or two o'clock my sister and I found ourselves the only guests left, and on the Great Unknown proposing a walk to a point in his plantations called Turnagain, we gladly accepted his offer and set out.

"In the course of our walk he entertained us much by an account of the origin of the beautiful song of 'Auld Robin Gray.' 'It was written,' he said, 'by Lady Anne Lindsay, now Lady Anne Barnard. She happened to be at a house where she met Miss Suff Johnstone, a well known person, who played the air, and accompanied it by words of no great delicacy, whatever their antiquity might be;—and Lady Anne, lamenting that no better words should belong to such a melody, immediately set to work and composed this very pathetic story. Truth, I am sorry to say, obliges me to add that it was a fiction. Robin Gray was her father's gardener, and the idea of the young lover going to sea, which would have been quite out of character here amongst the shepherds, was natural enough where she was then residing, on the coast of Fife. It was long unknown,' he added, 'who the author was; and indeed there was a clergyman on the coast whose conscience was so large that he took the burden of this matter upon himself, and pleaded guilty to the authorship. About two years ago I wrote to Lady Anne to know the truth—and she wrote back to say she was certainly the author, but wondered how I could have guessed it, as there was no person alive to whom she had told it. When I mentioned having heard it long ago from a common friend who was dead, she then recollected me, and wrote one of the kindest letters I ever received, saying she had till now not the smallest idea that I was the little *lame boy* she had known so many years before.'

"I give this anecdote, partly from its own interest, and partly for the sake of introducing the unconcerned allusion to his own lameness—which I have heard him

mention repeatedly, in the same sort of way, without seemingly caring about it. Once speaking of the old city wall of Edinburgh (which, by the way, he says was built during the panic caused by the disastrous battle of Flodden Field)—he said it used to be a great *ploy* in his youth to climb the said wall. ‘I used often to do it,’ he observed, ‘notwithstanding my bad foot, which made it no very easy job.’

“On coming to a broad path in the middle of the woods, we took notice of a finger-post, on which was written ‘The *Rod* to Selkirk.’ We made some remark about Tom’s orthography, upon which he laughed, and said that that finger-post had gained him great popularity in the neighbourhood. ‘I cannot say,’ he remarked, ‘that I had any such view when I ordered it to be put up. The public road, it is true, is not far off, and this leads through the very centre of my grounds, but I never could bring myself to make that a reason for excluding any person who finds it agreeable or advantageous to take over the hill if he likes. But although my practice in this respect had always been well known, the actual admission of it, the avowed establishment of it as a sort of right, by sticking up the finger-post, was received as a kind of boon, and I got a world of credit for a thing which had certainly not any popularity for its object. ‘Nevertheless,’ he continued, ‘I have no scruple in saying that what I did, deserved the good people’s acknowledgment; and I seriously disapprove of those proprietors who act on a different principle in these matters. Nothing on earth would induce me to put up boards threatening prosecution, or cautioning one’s fellow-creatures to beware of man-traps and spring-guns. I hold that all such things are not only in the highest degree offensive and hurtful to the feelings of people whom it is every way important to conciliate, but that they are also quite inefficient—and I will venture to say, that not one of my young trees has ever been cut, nor a fence trodden down, or any kind of damage done, in consequence of the free access which all the world has to my place. Round the house, of course, there is a set of walks set apart and kept private for the ladies—but over all the rest of my

land any one may rove as he likes. I please myself with the reflection that many people of taste may be indulging their fancies in these grounds, and I often recollect how much of Burns's inspiration was probably due to his having near him the woods of Ballochmyle to ramble through at his will when he was a ragged callant.'

" 10th January, 1825.

"The party at Abbotsford breaks up this morning,—to the sorrow, I believe, of every member of it. The loadstar of our attraction, accompanied by his sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott, and her family, set off for Lord Dalhousie's—and all the others, except Lady Scott and her daughter, who are to follow in a day or two, are streaming off in different directions. Sir Walter seems as unwilling to leave the country, and return to the bustle of the city, as any schoolboy could have been to go back to his lessons after the holidays. No man perhaps enjoys the country more than he does, and he is said to return to it always with the liveliest relish. It may be asked, if this be so, why he does not give up the town altogether? He might do so, and keep his Sheriffship; but his Clerkship is a thing of more consequence, and that he must lose; and what is far more important still, his constant transactions with the book-sellers could never be carried on with convenience, were he permanently settled at a distance from them and their marts. His great purchases of land, his extensive plantations, the crowd of company which he entertains, and the splendid house he has just completed, are all severe pulls on his income—an income, it must be recollected, which is produced not from any fund, but by dint of labour, and from time to time. He is too prudent and sagacious a man not to live within his means; but as yet he cannot have laid by much, and he will have to write a good deal more before he can safely live where he pleases, and as he pleases.

"His house is filled with company all the year round, with persons of all ranks—from the highest down to the lowest class that is received at all in society; he is affable alike to them all, makes no effort at display on any occasion, is always gay and friendly, and puts every

one at his ease; I consider all else as a trifle compared with the entire simplicity of his manners, and the total apparent unconsciousness of the distinction which is his due. This, indeed, cannot possibly be assumed, but must be the result of the most entire modesty of heart, if I may use such an expression, the purest and most genuine kindness of disposition, which forbids his drawing any comparison to the disadvantage of others. He has been for many years the object of most acute and vigilant observation, and as far as my own opportunities have gone, I must agree with the general report—namely, that on no occasion has he ever betrayed the smallest symptom of vanity or affectation, or insinuated a thought bordering on presumption, or even on a consciousness of his own superiority in any respect whatsoever. Some of his oldest and most intimate friends assert, that he has even of late years become more simple and kindly than ever; that this attention to those about him, and absence of all apparent concern about himself, go on, if possible, increasing with his fame and fortune. Surely if Sir Walter Scott be not a happy man, which he seems truly to be, he deserves to be so!”

Thus terminates Captain Hall's *Abbotsford Journal*; and with his flourish of trumpets I must drop the curtain on a scene and period of unclouded prosperity and splendour. The muffled drum is in prospect.

XVI

MARRIAGE OF SCOTT'S ELDEST SON VISIT TO IRELAND

1825

WITH all his acuteness, Captain Basil Hall does not seem to have caught any suspicion of the real purpose and meaning of the ball for which he was invited back

to Abbotsford on the 7th of January, 1825. That evening was one of the very proudest and happiest in Scott's brilliant existence. Its festivities were held in honour of a young lady, whom the Captain names cursorily among the guests as "the pretty heiress of Lochore." It was known to not a few of the party, and I should have supposed it might have been surmised by the rest, that those halls were displayed for the first time in all their splendour, on an occasion not less interesting to the Poet than the conclusion of a treaty of marriage between the heir of his name and fortunes, and the amiable niece of his friends Sir Adam and Lady Ferguson. It was the first regular ball given at Abbotsford, and the last. Nay, though twelve years have elapsed, I believe nobody has ever danced under that roof since then. I myself never again saw the whole range of apartments thrown open for the reception of company except once—on the day of Sir Walter Scott's funeral. The lady's fortune was a handsome one, and her guardians exerted the powers with which they were invested, by requiring that the marriage-contract should settle Abbotsford (with reservation of Sir Walter's own liferent) upon the affianced parties, in the same manner as Lochore. To this condition he gave a ready assent, and the moment he had signed the deed, he exclaimed—"I have now parted with my lands with more pleasure than I ever derived from the acquisition or possession of them; and if I be spared for ten years, I think I may promise to settle as much more again upon these young folks."

The marriage took place at Edinburgh on the 3rd day of February, and when the young couple left Abbotsford two or three weeks afterwards, Sir Walter promised to visit them at their regimental quarters in Ireland in the course of the summer.

Before the Court of Session rose in July [1825], Sir Walter had made considerable progress in his *Sketch of the French Revolution*; but it was agreed that he should make his promised excursion to Ireland before any MS. went to the printers. He had seen no more of the sister island than Dunluce and the Giant's Causeway, of which we have his impressions in the *Lighthouse*

Diary of 1814; his curiosity about the scenery and the people was lively; and besides the great object of seeing his son and daughter-in-law under their own roof, and the scarcely inferior pleasure of another meeting with Miss Edgeworth, he looked forward to renewing his acquaintance with several accomplished persons, who had been serviceable to him in his labours upon Swift. But, illustriously as Ireland has contributed to the English Library, he had always been accustomed to hear that almost no books were now published there, and fewer sold than in any other country calling itself civilized; and he had naturally concluded that apathy and indifference prevailed as to literature itself, and of course as to literary men. He had not, therefore, formed the remotest anticipation of the kind of reception which awaited him in Dublin, and indeed throughout the island wherever he traversed it.

It did not suit either Lady Scott or her eldest daughter to be of the Irish expedition; Anne Scott and myself accompanied Sir Walter. We left Edinburgh on the 8th of July in a light open carriage, and after spending a few days among our friends in Lanarkshire, we embarked at Glasgow in a steamer for Belfast.

On Thursday the 14th we reached Dublin in time for dinner, and found young Walter and his bride established in one of those large and noble houses in St. Stephen's Green (the most extensive square in Europe), the founders of which little dreamt that they should ever be let at an easy rate as garrison lodgings. Never can I forget the fond joy and pride with which Sir Walter looked round him, as he sat for the first time at his son's table. I could not but recall Pindar's lines, in which, wishing to paint the gentlest rapture of felicity, he describes an old man with a foaming wine-cup in his hand at his child's wedding-feast.

It would be endless to enumerate the distinguished persons who, morning after morning, crowded his *levee* in St. Stephen's Green. The courts of law were not then sitting, and most of the judges were out of town; but all the other great functionaries, and the leading noblemen and gentlemen of the city and its neighbourhood, of whatever sect or party, hastened to tender

every conceivable homage and hospitality. But all this was less surprising to the companions of his journey (though, to say truth, we had, no more than himself, counted on such eager enthusiasm among any class of Irish society), than the demonstrations of respect which, after the first day or two, awaited him, wherever he moved, at the hands of the less elevated orders of the Dublin population. If his carriage was recognised at the door of any public establishment, the street was sure to be crowded before he came out again, so as to make his departure as slow as a procession. When he entered a street, the watchword was passed down both sides like lightning, and the shopkeepers and their wives stood bowing and curtsying all the way down; while the mob and boys huzza'd as at the chariot wheels of a conqueror. I had certainly been most thoroughly unprepared for finding the common people of Dublin so alive to the claims of any non-military greatness. Sir Robert Peel says, that Sir Walter's reception on the High Street of Edinburgh, in August, 1822, was the first thing that gave him a notion of "the electric shock of a nation's gratitude." I doubt if even that scene surpassed what I myself witnessed when he returned down Dame Street, after inspecting the Castle of Dublin. Bailie * * * *, who had been in the crowd on that occasion, called afterwards in Stephen's Green to show Sir Walter some promised Return about his Glasgow Police, and observed to me, as he withdrew, that "*yon* was owre like worshipping the creature."

On the 1st of August we proceeded from Dublin to Edgeworthstown, the party being now reinforced by Captain and Mrs. Scott, and also by the delightful addition of the Surgeon-General, who had long been an intimate friend of the Edgeworth family, and equally gratified both the novelists by breaking the toils of his great practice to witness their meeting on his native soil. A happy meeting it was: we remained there for several days, making excursions to Loch Oel and other scenes of interest in Longford and the adjoining counties; the gentry everywhere exerting themselves with true Irish zeal to signalize their affectionate pride in their illustrious countrywoman, and their appreciation.

of her guest ; while her brother, Mr. Lovell Edgeworth, had his classical mansion filled every evening with a succession of distinguished friends, the *élite* of Ireland. Here, above all, we had the opportunity of seeing in what universal respect and comfort a gentleman's family may live in that country, and in far from its most favoured district, provided only they live there habitually, and do their duty as the friends and guardians of those among whom Providence has appointed their proper place. Here we found neither mud hovels nor naked peasantry, but snug cottages and smiling faces all about. Here there was a very large school in the village, of which masters and pupils were in a nearly equal proportion Protestants and Roman Catholics—the Protestant squire himself making it a regular part of his daily business to visit the scene of their operations, and strengthen authority and enforce discipline by his personal superintendence. Here, too, we pleased ourselves with recognising some of the sweetest features in Goldsmith's picture of

“Sweet Auburn ! loveliest village of the plain ;”

and, in particular, we had “the playful children just let loose from school” in perfection. Mr. Edgeworth's paternal heart delighted in letting them make a playground of his lawn ; and every evening after dinner we saw leap-frog going on with the highest spirit within fifty yards of the drawing-room windows, while fathers and mothers, and their aged parents also, were grouped about among the trees watching the sport. It is a curious enough coincidence that Oliver Goldsmith and Maria Edgeworth should both have derived their early love and knowledge of Irish character and manners from the same identical district. He received part of his education at this very school of Edgeworthstown ; and Pallasmore (the *locus cui nomen est Pallas* of Johnson's epitaph), the little hamlet where the author of the *Vicar of Wakefield* first saw the light, is still, as it was in his time, the property of the Edgeworths.

It may well be imagined with what lively interest Sir Walter surveyed the scenery with which so many of the proudest recollections of Ireland must ever be associated,

and how curiously he studied the rural manners it presented to him, in the hope (not disappointed) of being able to trace some of his friend's bright creations to their first hints and germs. On the delight with which he contemplated her position in the midst of her own large and happy domestic circle, I need say still less. The reader is aware by this time how deeply he condemned and pitied the conduct and fate of those who, gifted with preëminent talents for the instruction and entertainment of their species at large, fancy themselves entitled to neglect those every-day duties and charities of life, from the mere shadowing of which in imaginary pictures the genius of poetry and romance has always reaped its highest and purest, perhaps its only true and immortal honours. In Maria he hailed a sister spirit—one who, at the summit of literary fame, took the same modest, just, and, let me add, *Christian* view of the relative importance of the feelings, the obligations, and the hopes in which we are all equally partakers, and those talents and accomplishments which may seem, to vain and short-sighted eyes, sufficient to constitute their possessors into an order and species apart from the rest of their kind. Such fantastic conceits found no shelter with either of these powerful minds.

Miss Edgeworth, her sister Harriet, and her brother William, were easily persuaded to join our party for the rest of our Irish travels. We had lingered a week at Edgeworthstown, and were now anxious to make the best of our way towards the Lakes of Killarney; but posting was not to be very rapidly accomplished in those regions by so large a company as had now collected—and we were more agreeably delayed by the hospitalities of Miss Edgeworth's old friends, and several of Sir Walter's new ones, at various mansions on our line of route—of which I must note especially Judge Moore's, at Lamberton, near Maryborough, because Sir Walter pronounced its beneficence to be even beyond the usual Irish scale; for, on reaching our next halting place, which was an indifferent country inn, we discovered that we need be in no alarm as to our dinner at all events, the Judge's people having privately packed up in one of the carriages, ere we

started in the morning, a pickled salmon, a most lordly venison pasty, and half-a-dozen bottles of champaign. But most of these houses seemed, like the Judge's, to have been constructed on the principle of the Peri Banou's tent. They seemed all to have room not only for the lion and lioness, and their respective tails, but for all in the neighbourhood who could be held worthy to inspect them at feeding-time.

It was a succession of festive gaiety wherever we halted; and in the course of our movements we saw many castles, churches, and ruins of all sorts—with more than enough of mountain, wood, lake, and river, to have made any similar progress in any other part of Europe, truly delightful in all respects. But those of the party to whom the South of Ireland was new, had almost continually before them spectacles of abject misery, which robbed these things of more than half their charm. Sir Walter, indeed, with the habitual hopefulness of his temper, persisted that what he saw even in Kerry was better than what books had taught him to expect; and insured, therefore, that improvement, however slow, was going on. But, ever and anon, as we moved deeper into the country, there was a melancholy in his countenance, and, despite himself, in the tone of his voice, which I for one could not mistake. The constant passings and repassings of bands of mounted policemen, armed to the teeth, and having quite the air of highly disciplined soldiers on sharp service;—the rueful squalid poverty that crawled by every way-side, and blocked up every village where we had to change horses, with exhibitions of human suffering and degradation, such as it had never entered into our heads to conceive;—and, above all, the contrast between these naked clamorous beggars, who seemed to spring out of the ground at every turn like swarms of vermin, and the boundless luxury and merriment surrounding the thinly scattered magnates who condescended to inhabit their ancestral seats, would have been sufficient to poison those landscapes, had nature dressed them out in the verdure of Arcadia, and art embellished them with all the temples and palaces of Old Rome and Athens.

Having crossed the hills from Killarney to Cork, where a repetition of the Dublin reception—corporation honours, deputations of the literary and scientific societies, and so forth—awaited him, he gave a couple of days to the hospitality of this flourishing town, and the beautiful scenery of the Lee; not forgetting an excursion to the groves of Blarney, among whose shades we had a right mirthful pic-nic. Sir Walter scrambled up to the top of the castle, and kissed, with due faith and devotion, the famous *Blarney stone*, one salute of which is said to emancipate the pilgrim from all future visitations of *mauvaise honte*.

From Cork we proceeded to Dublin by Fermoy, Lismore, Cashel, Kilkenny, and Holycross—at all of which places we were bountifully entertained, and assiduously ciceroned—to our old quarters in St. Stephen's Green; and after a morning or two spent in taking leave of many kind faces that he was never to see again, Sir Walter and his original fellow-travellers started for Holyhead on the 18th of August. Our progress through North Wales produced nothing worth recording, except perhaps the feeling of delight which everything in the aspect of the common people, their dress, their houses, their gardens, and their husbandry, could not fail to call up in persons who had just been seeing Ireland for the first time; and a short visit (which was, indeed, the only one he made) to the far-famed "ladies" of Llangollen. They had received some hint that Sir Walter meant to pass their way; and on stopping at the inn, he received an invitation so pressing, to add one more to the long list of the illustrious visitors of their retreat, that it was impossible for him not to comply. We had read histories and descriptions enough of these romantic spinsters, and were prepared to be well amused; but the reality surpassed all expectation.

An extract from a gossiping letter of the following week will perhaps be sufficient for Llangollen.

"Elleray, August 24.

***"We slept on Wednesday evening at Capel Carig, which Sir W. supposes to mean the Chapel of the Crag; a pretty little inn in a most picturesque

situation certainly, and as to the matter of toasted cheese, quite exquisite. Next day we advanced through, I verily believe, the most perfect gem of a country eye ever saw, having almost all the wildness of Highland backgrounds, and all the loveliness of rich English landscape nearer us, and streams like the purest and most babbling of our own. At Llangollen your papa was waylaid by the celebrated 'Ladies'—viz. Lady Eleanor Butler and the Honourable Miss Ponsonby, who having been one or both crossed in love, foreswore all dreams of matrimony in the heyday of youth, beauty, and fashion, and selected this charming spot for the repose of their now time-honoured virginity. It was many a day, however, before they could get implicit credit for being the innocent friends they really were, among the people of the neighbourhood; for their elopement from Ireland had been performed under suspicious circumstances; and as Lady Eleanor arrived here in her natural aspect of a pretty girl, while Miss Ponsonby had condescended to accompany her in the garb of a smart footman in buckskin breeches, years and years elapsed ere full justice was done to the character of their romance. We proceeded up the hill, and found everything about them and their habitation odd and extravagant beyond report. Imagine two women,—one apparently seventy, the other sixty-five,—dressed in heavy blue riding-habits, enormous shoes, and men's hats, with their petticoats so tucked up, that at the first glance of them, fussing and tottering about their porch in the agony of expectation, we took them for a couple of hazy or crazy old sailors. On nearer inspection they both wear a world of brooches, rings, etc., and Lady Eleanor positively *orders*—several stars and crosses, and a red ribbon, exactly like a K.C.B. To crown all, they have crop heads, shaggy, rough, bushy, and as white as snow, the one with age alone, the other assisted by a sprinkling of powder. The elder lady is almost blind, and every way much decayed; the other, the *ci-devant* groom, in good preservation. But who could paint the prints, the dogs, the cats, the miniatures, the cram of cabinets, clocks, glass-cases, books, bijouterie, dragon-china, nodding mandarins, and whirligigs of

every shape and hue—the whole house outside and in (for we must see everything to the dressing-closets), *covered* with carved oak, very rich and fine some of it—and the illustrated copies of Sir W.'s poems, and the joking simpering compliments about Waverley, and the anxiety to know who MacIvor really was, and the absolute devouring of the poor Unknown, who had to carry off, besides all the rest, one small bit of literal *butter* dug up in a Milesian stone jar lately from the bottom of some Irish bog. Great romance (*i.e.* absurd innocence of character) one must have looked for; but it was confounding to find this mixed up with such eager curiosity, and enormous knowledge of the tattle and scandal of the world they had so long left. Their tables were piled with newspapers from every corner of the kingdom, and they seemed to have the deaths and marriages of the antipodes at their fingers' ends. Their albums and autographs, from Louis XVIII. and George IV., down to magazine poets and quack-doctors, are a museum. I shall never see the spirit of blue-stockings again in such perfect incarnation. Peveril won't get over their final kissing match for a week. Yet it is too bad to laugh at these good old girls; they have long been the guardian angels of the village, and are worshipped by man, woman, and child about them."

This letter was written on the banks of Windermere, where we were received with the warmth of old friendship by Mr. Wilson, and one whose grace and gentle goodness could have found no lovelier or fitter home than Elleray, except where she is now.

Mr. Bolton's seat, to which Canning had invited Scott, is situated a couple of miles lower down on the same Lake; and thither Mr. Wilson conducted him next day. A large company had been assembled there in honour of the Minister—it included already Mr. Wordsworth. It has not, I suppose, often happened to a plain English merchant, wholly the architect of his own fortunes, to entertain at one time a party embracing so many illustrious names. He was proud of his guests; they respected him, and honoured and loved each other; and it would have been difficult to say which star in the constellation shone with the brightest or the softest

light. There was "high discourse," intermingled with as gay flashings of courtly wit as ever Canning displayed; and a plentiful allowance, on all sides, of those airy transient pleasantries, in which the fancy of poets, however wise and grave, delights to run riot when they are sure not to be misunderstood. There were beautiful and accomplished women to adorn and enjoy this circle. The weather was as Elysian as the scenery. There were brilliant cavalcades through the woods in the mornings, and delicious boatings on the Lake by moonlight; and the last day "the Admiral of the Lake" presided over one of the most splendid regattas that ever enlivened Windermere. Perhaps there were not fewer than fifty barges following in the Professor's radiant procession, when it paused at the point of Storrs to admit into the place of honour the vessel that carried kind and happy Mr. Bolton and his guests. The bards of the Lakes led the cheers that hailed Scott and Canning; and music and sunshine, flags, streamers, and gay dresses, the merry hum of voices, and the rapid splashing of innumerable oars, made up a dazzling mixture of sensations as the flotilla wound its way among the richly-foliaged islands, and along bays and promontories peopled with enthusiastic spectators.

On at last quitting the festive circle of Storrs, we visited the family of the late Bishop Watson at Calgarth, and Mr. Wordsworth at his charming retreat of Mount Rydal. He accompanied us to Keswick, where we saw Mr. Southey in his unrivalled library. Mr. Wordsworth and his daughter then turned with us, and passing over Kirkstone to Ulswater, conducted us first to his friend Mr. Marshall's elegant villa, near Lyulph's Tower, and on the next day to the noble castle of his lifelong friend and patron Lord Lonsdale. The Earl and Countess had their halls filled with another splendid circle of distinguished persons, who, like them, lavished all possible attentions and demonstrations of respect upon Sir Walter. He remained a couple of days, and perambulated, under Wordsworth's guidance, the superb terraces and groves of the "fair domain" which that poet has connected with the noblest monument of his genius. But the temptations of Storrs and Lowther

had cost more time than had been calculated upon, and the promised visit to Rokeby was unwillingly abandoned. Sir Walter reached Abbotsford again on the 1st of September, and said truly that "his tour had been one ovation."

XVII

SCOTT'S "JOURNAL"

1825

WITHOUT an hour's delay Sir Walter resumed his usual habits of life at Abbotsford—the musing ramble among his own glens, the breezy ride over the moors, the merry spell at the woodman's axe, or the festive chase of Newark, Fernilee, Hangingshaw, or Deloraine; the quiet old-fashioned contentment of the little domestic circle, alternating with the brilliant phantasmagoria of admiring, and sometimes admired, strangers.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street sent me a transcript of Lord Byron's *Ravenna Diary*, with permission for my neighbour also to read it if he pleased. Sir Walter read those extraordinary pages with the liveliest interest, and filled several of the blank leaves and margins with illustrative annotations and anecdotes, some of which have lately been made public, as the rest will doubtless be hereafter. In perusing what Byron had jotted down from day to day in the intervals of regular composition, it very naturally occurred to Sir Walter that the noble poet had done well to avoid troubling himself by any adoption or affectation of plan or order—giving an opinion, a reflection, a reminiscence, serious or comic, or the incidents of the passing hour, just as the spirit moved him;—and seeing what a mass of curious things, such as "after times would not willingly let die," had been thus rescued from oblivion at a very slight cost of exertion,—he resolved to attempt keeping thenceforth a somewhat similar record. A thick quarto volume, bound in vellum, with a lock and key, was forthwith procured; and Sir Walter

began the journal, from which I shall begin, in the next chapter, to draw copiously.

The Journal on which we are about to enter, has on the title-page, "Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford, Bart., his Gurnal;"—and this foot-note to *Gurnal*, "A hard word, so spelt on the authority of Miss Sophia Scott, now Mrs. Lockhart." This is a little joke, alluding to a note-book kept by his eldest girl during one of the Highland expeditions of earlier days, in which he was accompanied by his wife and children. The *motto* is,—

"As I walked by myself,
I talked to myself,
And thus myself said to me."—*Old Song*.

These lines are quoted also in his review of Pepys's Diary. That book was published just before he left Edinburgh in July. It was, I believe, the only one he took with him to Ireland; and I never observed him more delighted with any book whatsoever. He had ever afterwards many of its queer turns and phrases on his lips.

"November 30 [1825].—I am come to the time when 'those that look out of the windows shall be darkened.' I must now wear spectacles constantly in reading and writing, though till this winter I have made a shift by using only their occasional assistance. Although my health cannot be better, I feel my lameness becomes sometimes painful, and often inconvenient. Walking on the pavement or causeway gives me trouble, and I am glad when I have accomplished my return on foot from the Parliament House to Castle Street, though I can (taking a competent time, as old *Braxie* said on another occasion) walk five or six miles in the country with pleasure. Well, such things must come, and be received with cheerful submission. My early lameness considered, it was impossible for a man to have been stronger or more active than I have been, and that for twenty or thirty years. Seams will slit, and elbows will out, quoth the tailor; and as I was fifty-four 15th August last, my mortal vestments are none of the newest. Then Walter, Charles, and Lockhart, are as active and handsome young fellows as you can see;

and while they enjoy strength and activity, I can hardly be said to want it. I have perhaps all my life set an undue value on these gifts. Yet it does appear to me, that high and independent feelings are naturally, though not uniformly or inseparably, connected with bodily advantages. Strong men are usually good-humoured, and active men often display the same elasticity of mind as of body.—These superiorities, indeed, are often misused. But, even for these things, God shall call us to judgment.

"December 14.—Affairs very bad again in the money-market in London. It must come here, and I have far too many engagements not to feel it. To end the matter at once, I intend to borrow £10,000, with which my son's marriage-contract allows me to charge my estate. This will enable us to dispense in a great measure with bank assistance, and sleep in spite of thunder. I do not know why it is—this business makes me a little bilious, or rather the want of exercise during the Session, and this late change of the weather to too much heat. But the sun and moon shall dance on the green ere carelessness or hope of gain, or facility of getting cash, shall make me go too deep again, were it but for the disquiet of the thing.

"December 18.—Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me—that is one comfort. Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least. I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient wealth on account of the innocence of my intentions, and my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad hearts, too, at Darnick, and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest?—how live a poor indebted man, where I was once the wealthy, the honoured? I was to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish—but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things!

I must get them kind masters ! There may be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog, because it has been mine. I must end these gloomy forebodings, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress. I feel my dogs' feet on my knees—I hear them whining and seeking me everywhere. This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be. An odd thought strikes me—When I die, will the journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read with wonder, that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced the risk of such a hitch?—or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of Chivalry had hung up his scutcheon, and where one or two old friends will look grave, and whisper to each other, 'Poor gentleman'—'a well-meaning man'—'nobody's enemy but his own'—'thought his parts would never wear out'—'family poorly left'—'pity he took that foolish title.' Who can answer this question?

"Poor Will Laidlaw !—poor Tom Purdie !—such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow's besides, to whom my prosperity was daily bread.

"Ballantyne behaves like himself, and sinks the prospect of his own ruin in contemplating mine. I tried to enrich him indeed, and now all—all is in the balance. He will have the Journal still, that is a comfort, for sure they cannot find a better editor. *They*—alas, who will *they* be—the *unbekannten Obern* who may have to dispose of my all as they will? Some hard-eyed banker, some of these men of millions whom I described.

"I have endeavoured to give vent to thoughts naturally so painful, by writing these notes—partly to keep them at bay by busying myself with the history of the French Convention. I thank God I can do both with reasonable composure. I wonder how Anne will bear such an affliction. She is passionate, but stout-hearted and courageous in important matters, though irritable in trifles. I am glad Lockhart and his wife are gone. Why? I cannot tell—but I *am* pleased to be left to my own regrets, without being melted by condolences, though of the most sincere and affectionate kind."

But before I return to this Diary, it may be well to

transcribe the very short passage of James Ballantyne's deathbed memorandum which refers to this painful period. Mr. Ballantyne says, in that most candid paper—

"I need not here enlarge upon the unfortunate facility which, at the period of universal confidence and indulgence, our and other houses received from the banks. Suffice it to say, that all our appearances of prosperity, as well as those of Constable, and Hurst and Robinson, were merely shadows, and that from the moment the bankers exhibited symptoms of doubt, it might have been easy to discover what must be the ultimate result. During weeks, and even months, however, our house was kept in a state of very painful suspense. The other two, I have no doubt, saw the coming events more clearly. I must here say, that it was one of Sir Walter's weaknesses to shrink too much from looking evil in the face, and that he was apt to carry a great deal too far—'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' I do not think it was more than three weeks before the catastrophe that he became fully convinced it was impending—if indeed his feelings ever reached the length of conviction at all. Thus, at the last, his fortitude was very severely tried indeed."

XVIII

EXTRACTS FROM SCOTT'S JOURNAL ILLNESS AND DEATH OF LADY SCOTT

1826

"JANUARY 22.—I feel neither dishonoured nor broken down by the bad—now really bad news I have received. I have walked my last on the domains I have planted—sate the last time in the halls I have built. But death would have taken them from me if misfortune had spared them. My poor people whom I loved so well!—There is just another die to turn up against me in this

run of ill-luck;—*i.e.* if I should break my magic wand in the fall from this elephant, and lose my popularity with my fortune. Then Woodstock and Bony may both go to the paper-maker, and I may take to smoking cigars and drinking grog, or turn devotee, and intoxicate the brain another way. In prospect of absolute ruin, I wonder if they would let me leave the Court of Session. I would like, methinks, to go abroad,

‘And lay my bones far from the *Tweed*.’

But I find my eyes moistening, and that will not do. I will not yield without a fight for it. It is odd, when I set myself to work *doggedly*, as Dr. Johnson would say, I am exactly the same man as I ever was—neither low-spirited nor *distract*. In prosperous times I have sometimes felt my fancy and powers of language flag, but adversity is to me at least a tonic and bracer; the fountain is awakened from its inmost recesses, as if the spirit of affliction had troubled it in his passage.

“I went to the Court for the first time to-day, and, like the man with the large nose, thought everybody was thinking of me and my mishaps. Many were, undoubtedly, and all rather regrettingly; some obviously affected. It is singular to see the difference of men’s manner whilst they strive to be kind or civil in their way of addressing me. Some smiled as they wished me good-day, as if to say, ‘Think nothing about it, my lad; it is quite out of our thoughts.’ Others greeted me with the affected gravity which one sees and despises at a funeral. The best-bred—all, I believe, meaning equally well—just shook hands and went on. A foolish puff in the papers, calling on men and gods to assist a popular author, who having choused the public of many thousands, had not the sense to keep wealth when he had it. If I am hard pressed, and measures used against me, I must use all means of legal defence, and subscribe myself bankrupt in a petition for sequestration. It is the course one should, at any rate, have advised a client to take. But for this I would, in a Court of Honour, deserve to lose my spurs. No,—if they permit me, I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds (or what

may sell for such) to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself. And this from no reluctance to be called the Insolvent, which I probably am, but because I will not put out of the power of my creditors the resources, mental or literary, which yet remain to me.

"*January 25.*—Anne is ill this morning. May God help us! If it should prove serious, as I have known it in such cases, where am I to find courage or comfort?

"*March 19.*—Lady S., the faithful and true companion of my fortunes, good and bad, for so many years, has, but with difficulty, been prevailed on to see Dr. Abercrombie, and his opinion is far from favourable. Her asthmatic complaints are fast terminating in hydropsy, as I have long suspected; yet the announcement of the truth is overwhelming. They are to stay a little longer in town to try the effects of a new medicine. On Wednesday they propose to return hither—a new affliction, where there was enough before; yet her constitution is so good, that if she will be guided by advice, things may be yet ameliorated. God grant it! for really these misfortunes come too close upon each other.

"*April 3.*—I have the extraordinary and gratifying news that Woodstock is sold for £8228—all ready money—a matchless sale for less than three months' work. If Napoleon does as well, or near it, it will put the trust affairs in high flourish. Four or five years of leisure and industry would, with such success, amply replace my losses. I have a curious fancy: I will go set two or three acorns, and judge by their success in growing whether I shall succeed in clearing my way or not.

"*May 2.*—Yesterday was a splendid May-day—to-day seems inclined to be *soft*, as we call it; but *tant mieux*. Yesterday had a twang of frost in it. I must get to work and finish Boaden's Life of Kemble, and Kelly's Reminiscences, for the Quarterly.—I wrote and read for three hours, and then walked, the day being soft and delightful; but, alas! all my walks are lonely from the absence of my poor companion. She does not suffer, thank God—but strength must fail at last. Since Sunday there has been a gradual change—very gradual—

but, alas ! to the worse. My hopes are almost gone. But I am determined to stand this grief as I have done others.

"*Abbotsford, May 16.*—She died at nine in the morning, after being very ill for two days—easy at last. I arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which returned on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child—the language as well as the tones broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission. 'Poor mamma—never return again—gone for ever—a better place.' Then, when she came to herself, she spoke with sense, freedom, and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger—what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how I feel—sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne; an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone.—Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

"*May 23.*—About an hour before the mournful ceremony of yesterday, Walter arrived, having travelled express from Ireland on receiving the news. He was much affected, poor fellow,—and no wonder. Poor Charlotte nursed him, and perhaps for that reason she was over partial to him. The whole scene floats as a sort of dream before me—the beautiful day, the grey ruins covered and hidden among clouds of foliage and flourish, where the grave, even in the lap of beauty, lay lurking, and gaped for its prey. Then the grave looks, the hasty important bustle of men with spades and mattocks—the train of carriages—the coffin containing the creature that was so long the dearest on earth to me, and whom I was to consign to the very spot which

in pleasure-parties we so frequently visited. It seems still as if this could not be really so. But it is so—and duty to God and to my children must teach me patience.”

XIX

VISITS TO LONDON AND PARIS. EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL

1826-1829

ON the 12th of October [1826], Sir Walter left Abbotsford for London, where he had been promised access to the papers in the Government offices; and thence he proceeded to Paris, in the hope of gathering from various eminent persons authentic anecdotes concerning Napoleon. His Diary shows that he was successful in obtaining many valuable materials for the completion of his historical work; and reflects, with sufficient distinctness, the very brilliant reception he, on this occasion, experienced both in London and Paris. The range of his society is strikingly (and unconsciously) exemplified in the record of one day, when we find him breakfasting at the Royal Lodge in Windsor Park, and supping on oysters and porter in “honest Dan Terry’s house, like a squirrel’s cage,” above the Adelphi Theatre, in the Strand. There can be no doubt that this expedition was in many ways serviceable to his *Life of Napoleon*; and I think as little, that it was chiefly so by renerving his spirits. The deep and respectful sympathy with which his misfortunes, and gallant behaviour under them, had been regarded by all classes of men at home and abroad, was brought home to his perception in a way not to be mistaken. He was cheered and gratified, and returned to Scotland, with renewed hope and courage, for the prosecution of his marvellous course of industry.

“*October 20.*—Commanded down to pass a day at Windsor. This is very kind of his Majesty.—At break-

fast, Crofton Croker, author of the Irish Fairy Tales—little as a dwarf, keen-eyed as a hawk, and of easy, prepossessing manners—something like Tom Moore. Here were also Terry, Allan Cunningham, Newton, and others. Now I must go to work. Went down to Windsor, or rather to the Lodge in the Forest, which, though ridiculed by connoisseurs, seems to be no bad specimen of a royal retirement, and is delightfully situated. A kind of cottage, too large perhaps for the style, but yet so managed, that in the walks you only see parts of it at once, and these well composed and grouping with the immense trees. His Majesty received me with the same mixture of kindness and courtesy which has always distinguished his conduct towards me. There was no company besides the royal retinue—Lady Conyngham—her daughter—and two or three other ladies. After we left table, there was excellent music by the royal band, who lay ambushed in a green-house adjoining the apartment. The King made me sit beside him, and talk a great deal—*too much* perhaps—for he has the art of raising one's spirits, and making you forget the *retenue* which is prudent everywhere, especially at court. But he converses himself with so much ease and elegance, that you lose thoughts of the prince in admiring the well-bred and accomplished gentleman. He is in many respects the model of a British Monarch—has little inclination to try experiments on government otherwise than through his Ministers—sincerely, I believe, desires the good of his subjects—is kind towards the distressed, and moves and speaks 'every inch a king.' I am sure such a man is fitter for us than one who would long to head armies, or be perpetually intermeddling with *la grande politique*. A sort of reserve, which creeps on him daily, and prevents his going to places of public resort, is a disadvantage, and prevents his being so generally popular as is earnestly to be desired."

On proceeding to Edinburgh to resume his official duties, Sir Walter established himself in a furnished house in Walker Street, it being impossible for him to leave his daughter alone in the country, and the aspect of his affairs being so much ameliorated that he did not

think it necessary to carry the young lady to such a place as Mrs. Brown's lodgings. During the six ensuing months, however, he led much the same life of toil and seclusion from company which that of Abbotsford had been during the preceding autumn—very rarely dining abroad, except with one or two intimate friends, *en famille*—still more rarely receiving even a single guest at home; and, when there was no such interruption, giving his night as well as his morning to the desk.

He spent a few days at Abbotsford at Christmas, and several weeks during the spring vacation; but the frequent Saturday excursions were now out of the question—if for no other reason, on account of the quantity of books which he must have by him while working at his Napoleon. He says on the 30th of December—"Wrote hard. Last day of an eventful year; much evil—and some good, but especially the courage to endure what Fortune sends, without becoming a pipe for her fingers. It is *not* the last day of the year; but to-morrow being Sunday, we hold our festival to-day. The Fergussons came, and we had the usual appliances of mirth and good cheer. Yet our party, like the chariot-wheels of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, dragged heavily.—It must be allowed that the regular recurrence of annual festivals among the same individuals has, as life advances, something in it that is melancholy. We meet like the survivors of some perilous expedition, wounded and weakened ourselves, and looking through diminished ranks to think of those who are no more. Or they are like the feasts of the Caribs, in which they held that the pale and speechless phantoms of the deceased appeared and mingled with the living. Yet where shall we fly from vain repining?—or why should we give up the comfort of seeing our friends, because they can no longer be to us, or we to them, what we once were to each other?

"*January 1, 1827.*—God make this a happy new year to the King and country, and to all honest men!"

Woodstock, as we have seen, placed upwards of £8000 in the hands of Sir Walter's creditors. The Napoleon (first and second editions) produced for them a sum which it even now startles me to mention,—

18,000. As by the time the historical work was published, nearly half of the First Series of Chronicles of the Canongate had been written, it is obvious that the amount to which Scott's literary industry, from the close of 1825, to the 10th of June, 1827, had diminished his estate, cannot be stated at less than £28,000. Had it not been spared him, how soon must he have freed himself from all his encumbrances!

My wife and I spent the summer of 1827, partly at sea-bathing place near Edinburgh, and partly in Roxburghshire. The arrival of his daughter and her children at Portobello was a source of constant refreshment to him during June; for every other day he came down and dined there, and strolled about afterwards on the beach; thus interrupting, beneficially for his health, and doubt not for the result of his labours also, the new custom of regular night-work, or, as he called it, of living double-tides. When the Court released him, he returned to Abbotsford, his family did what they could to keep him to his ancient evening habits; but nothing was so useful as the presence of his invalid grandson. The poor child was at this time so far restored as to be able to sit his pony again; and Sir Walter, who had conceived, the very day he finished *Poleon*, the notion of putting together a series of tales on the history of Scotland, somewhat in the manner of Mr. Croker's on that of England, rode daily through the woods with his "Hugh Littlejohn," and told his tale, and ascertained that it suited the comprehension of boyhood, before he reduced it to writing. My Grey had been dismissed in consequence of the accident at the Catrail; and he had now stooped his head to a sober, steady creature, of very humble blood; dun, with black mane and legs; by name Ice Davie, *alias* the Covenanter. This, the last of steeds, by the way, had been previously in the position of a jolly old laird in a neighbouring county, had acquired a distinguished reputation by its skill in bringing him home safely when dead drunk. Douce Davie, on such occasions, accommodated himself to the varying balance of his rider with such nice discrimination, that, on the laird's death, the country people

expected a vigorous competition for the sagacious animal; but the club-companions of the defunct stood off to a man when it was understood that the Sheriff coveted the succession.

A dividend of six shillings in the pound was paid at this Christmas to Scott's creditors on their whole claims. The result of their high-hearted debtor's exertions, between January, 1826, and January, 1828, was in all very nearly £40,000. No literary biographer, in all likelihood, will ever have such another fact to record. The creditors unanimously passed a vote of thanks for the indefatigable industry which had achieved so much for their behoof.

The close of the autumn [1829] was embittered by a sudden and most unexpected deprivation. Apparently in the fullest enjoyment of health and vigour, Thomas Purdie leaned his head one evening on the table, and dropped asleep. This was nothing uncommon in a hard-working man; and his family went and came about him for several hours, without taking any notice. When supper came, they tried to awaken him, and found that life had been for some time extinct. Far different from other years, Sir Walter seemed impatient to get away from Abbotsford to Edinburgh. "I have lost," he writes (4th November) to Cadell, "my old and faithful servant—my factotum—and am so much shocked, that I really wish to be quit of the country and safe in town. I have this day laid him in the grave. This has prevented my answering your letters."

XX

FIRST PARALYTIC SEIZURE. RETIREMENT FROM COURT OF SESSION

1830-1831

SIR WALTER was now to pay the penalty of his unparalleled toils. On the 15th of February, about two o'clock in the afternoon, he returned from the Parliament House

ently in his usual state, and found an old acquaintance Miss Young of Hawick, waiting to show him MS. memoirs of her father (a dissenting minister of great worth and talents), which he had undertaken to revise and correct for the press. The old lady sat down for half an hour while he seemed to be occupied with her papers; at length he rose, as if to dismiss her, and sank down again—a slight convulsion agitating his nerves. After a few minutes he got up and staggered into the drawing-room, where Anne Scott and my sister, Elizabeth Lockhart, were sitting. They rushed to meet him, but he fell at full length on the floor ere they could reach him. He remained speechless for about ten minutes, by which time a surgeon had arrived and bled him.

He was cupped again in the evening, and gradually recovered possession of speech, and of all his faculties, in so far that, the occurrence being kept quiet, he appeared abroad again after a short interval, and in general observed no serious change. He submitted to the utmost severity of regimen, tasting neither wine nor food for some weeks, and the alarm of his family and intimate friends subsided. By and by, he again mingled in society much as usual, and seems to have *almost* persuaded himself that the attack had proceeded merely from the stomach, though his letters continued ever and anon to drop hints that the symptoms boded apoplexy or paralysis. When we recollect that both his father and his elder brother died of paralysis, and consider the terrible violences of agitation and exertion to which Sir Walter had been subjected during the four preceding years, the only wonder is that the stroke (which had, I suspect, several indistinct harbingers) was deferred so long; there can be none that it was soon followed by others of the same description. He struggled manfully, however, against his malady, and during 1830 covered almost as many sheets with his MS. as in 1829.

His Diary was resumed in May, and continued at regular intervals for the rest of the year; but its contents are commonly too medical for quotation. Now and then, however, occur entries which I cannot think of omitting. For example:

"May 27.—Court as usual. I am agitating a proposed retirement from the Court. As they are only to have four instead of six Clerks of Session in Scotland, it will be their interest to let me retire on a superannuation. Probably I shall make a bad bargain, and get only two-thirds of the salary, instead of three-fourths. This would be hard, but I could save between two or three hundred pounds by giving up town residence. At any rate, *jacta est alea*—Sir Robert Peel and the Advocate acquiesce in the arrangement, and Sir Robert Dundas retires alongst with me. I think the difference will be infinite in point of health and happiness. Yet I do not know. It is perhaps a violent change in the end of life to quit the walk one has trod so long, and the cursed splenetic temper which besets all men makes you value opportunities and circumstances when one enjoys them no longer. Well—'Things must be as they may,' as says that great philosopher Corporal Nym."

On the 26th of June, Sir Walter heard of the death of King George IV. with the regret of a devoted and obliged subject. He had received almost immediately before two marks of his Majesty's kind attention. Understanding that his retirement from the Court of Session was at hand, Sir William Knighton suggested to the King that Sir Walter might henceforth be more frequently in London, and that he might very fitly be placed at the head of a new commission for examining and editing the MSS. collections of the exiled Princes of the House of Stuart, which had come into the King's hands on the death of the Cardinal of York. This Sir Walter gladly accepted, and contemplated with pleasure spending the ensuing winter in London. But another proposition, that of elevating him to the rank of Privy Councillor, was unhesitatingly declined. He felt that any increase of rank under the circumstances of diminished fortune and failing health, would be idle and unsuitable, and desired his friend the Lord Chief-Commissioner, whom the King had desired to ascertain his feelings on the subject, to convey his grateful thanks, with his humble apology.

When the term ended in July, the affair of Sir Walter's retirement was all but settled; and soon after-

wards he was informed that he had ceased to be a Clerk of Session, and should thenceforth have, in lieu of his salary, etc. (£1300) an allowance of £800 per annum. This was accompanied by an intimation from the Home Secretary, that the Ministers were quite ready to grant him a pension covering the reduction in his income. Considering himself as the bond-slave of his creditors, he made known to them this proposition, and stated that it would be extremely painful to him to accept of it; and with the delicacy and generosity which throughout characterized their conduct towards him, they without hesitation entreated him on no account to do injury to his own feelings in such a matter as this. Few things gave him more pleasure than this handsome communication.

During the rest of the summer and autumn his daughter and I were at Chiefswood, and saw him of course daily. Laidlaw, too, had been restored to the cottage at Kaeside; and though Tom Purdie made a dismal blank, old habits went on, and the course of life seemed little altered from what it had used to be. He looked jaded and worn before evening set in, yet very seldom departed from the strict regimen of his doctors, and often brightened up to all his former glee, though passing the bottle, and sipping toast and water. His grandchildren especially saw no change. However languid, his spirits revived at the sight of them, and the greatest pleasure he had was in pacing Douce Davie through the green lanes among his woods, with them clustered about him on ponies and donkeys, while Laidlaw, the ladies, and myself, walked by, and obeyed his directions about pruning and marking trees. After the immediate alarms of the spring, it might have been even agreeable to witness this placid twilight scene, but for our knowledge that nothing could keep him from toiling many hours daily at his desk, and alas! that he was no longer sustained by the daily commendations of his printer. It was obvious, as the season advanced, that the manner in which Ballantyne communicated with him was sinking into his spirits, and Laidlaw foresaw, as well as myself, that some trying crisis of discussion could not be much longer deferred. A nervous twitch-

ing about the muscles of the mouth was always more or less discernible from the date of the attack in February; but we could easily tell, by the aggravation of that symptom, when he had received a packet from the Canongate. It was distressing, indeed, to think that he might, one of these days, sustain a second seizure, and be left still more helpless, yet with the same undiminished appetite for literary labour. And then, if he felt his printer's complaints so keenly, what was to be expected in the case of a plain and undeniable manifestation of disappointment on the part of the public, and consequently of the bookseller?

A more difficult and delicate task never devolved upon any man's friend, than Laidlaw had about this time to encounter. He could not watch Scott from hour to hour—above all, he could not write to his dictation, without gradually, slowly, most reluctantly taking home to his bosom the conviction that the mighty mind, which he had worshipped through more than thirty years of intimacy, had lost something, and was daily losing something more of its energy. The faculties were there, and each of them was every now and then displaying itself in its full vigour; but the sagacious judgment, the brilliant fancy, the unrivalled memory, were all subject to occasional eclipse—

“Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made.”

Ever and anon he paused and looked round him, like one half-waking from a dream, mocked with shadows. The sad bewilderment of his gaze showed a momentary consciousness that, like Samson in the lap of the Philistine, “his strength was passing from him, and he was becoming weak like unto other men.” Then came the strong effort of aroused will—the cloud dispersed as if before an irresistible current of purer air—all was bright and serene as of old—and then it closed again in yet deeper darkness.

During the early part of this winter the situation of Cadell and Ballantyne was hardly less painful, and still more embarrassing. What doubly and trebly perplexed them was, that while the MS. sent for press seemed

worse every budget, Sir Walter's private letters to them, more especially on points of business, continued as clear in thought, and almost so in expression, as formerly—full of the old shrewdness, and firmness, and manly kindness, and even of the old good-humoured pleasantry. About them, except the staggering penmanship, and here and there one word put down obviously for another, there was scarcely anything to indicate decayed vigour. It is not surprising that poor Ballantyne, in particular, should have shrunk from the notion that anything was amiss,—except the choice of an unfortunate subject, and the indulgence of more than common carelessness and rapidity in composition. He seems to have done so as he would from some horrid suggestion of the Devil; and accordingly obeyed his natural sense of duty, by informing Sir Walter, in plain terms, that he considered the opening chapters of Count Robert as decidedly inferior to anything that had ever before come from that pen.

Towards the end of November, Sir Walter had another slight touch of apoplexy. He recovered himself without assistance; but again consulted his physicians in Edinburgh, and by their advice adopted a still greater severity of regimen.

XXI

CONTINUED ILLNESS. PROPOSED TOUR IN
THE SOUTH OF EUROPE. VOYAGE IN THE
“BARHAM.” NAPLES

1831-1832

THE next entry in the Diary is as follows :

“From Saturday, 16th April, to Saturday, 24th, of the same month, unpleasantly occupied by ill health and its consequences. A distinct stroke of paralysis affecting both my nerves and speech, though beginning only on Monday with a very bad cold. Doctor Abercrombie was brought out by the friendly care of Cadell,—but

young Clarkson had already done the needful, that is, had bled and blistered, and placed me on a very reduced diet. Whether precautions have been taken in time, I cannot tell. I think they have, though severe in themselves, beat the disease; but I am alike prepared."

The preceding paragraph has been deciphered with difficulty. The blow which it records was greatly more severe than any that had gone before it. Sir Walter's friend Lord Meadowbank had come to Abbotsford, as usual when on the Jedburgh circuit; and he would make an effort to receive the Judge in something of the old style of the place; he collected several of the neighbouring gentry to dinner, and tried to bear his wonted part in the conversation. Feeling his strength and spirits flagging, he was tempted to violate his physician's directions, and took two or three glasses of champaign, not having tasted wine for several months before. On retiring to his dressing-room he had this severe shock of apoplectic paralysis, and kept his bed under the surgeon's hands for several days.

Shortly afterwards, his eldest son and his daughter Sophia arrived at Abbotsford. It may be supposed that they both would have been near him instantly, had that been possible; but, not to mention the dread of seeming to be alarmed about him, Major Scott's regiment was stationed in a very disturbed district, and his sister was still in a disabled state from the relics of a rheumatic fever. I followed her a week later, when we established ourselves at Chiefswood for the rest of the season. Charles Scott had some months before this time gone to Naples, as an attaché to the British embassy there. During the next six months the Major was at Abbotsford every now and then—as often as circumstances could permit him to be absent from his Hussars.

On my arrival (May 10th), I found Sir Walter to have rallied considerably; yet his appearance, as I first saw him, was the most painful sight I had ever then seen. Knowing at what time I might be expected, he had been lifted on his pony, and advanced about half a mile on the Selkirk road to meet me. He moved at a foot-pace, with Laidlaw at one stirrup, and his forester Swanston (a fine fellow, who did all he could to replace Tom

Purdie) at the other. Abreast was old Peter Mathieson on horseback, with one of my children astride before him on a pillion. Sir Walter had had his head shaved, and wore a black silk night-cap under his blue bonnet. All his garments hung loose about him; his countenance was thin and haggard, and there was an obvious distortion in the muscles of one cheek. His look, however, was placid—his eye as bright as ever—perhaps brighter than it ever was in health; he smiled with the same affectionate gentleness, and though at first it was not easy to understand everything he said, he spoke cheerfully and manfully.

He had resumed, and was trying to recast, his novel. All the medical men had urged him, by every argument, to abstain from any such attempts; but he smiled on them in silence, or answered with some jocular rhyme.

For two or three weeks he bent himself sedulously to his task—and concluded *Castle Dangerous*, and the long-suspended *Count Robert*. By this time he had submitted to the recommendation of all his medical friends, and agreed to spend the coming winter away from Abbotsford, among new scenes, in a more genial climate, and above all (so he promised), in complete abstinence from all literary labour. When Captain Basil Hall understood that he had resolved on wintering at Naples (where, as has been mentioned, his son Charles was attached to the British Legation), it occurred to the zealous sailor that on such an occasion as this all thoughts of political difference ought to be dismissed,—and he, unknown to Scott, addressed a letter to Sir James Graham, then First Lord of the Admiralty, stating the condition of his friend's health, and his proposed plan, and suggesting that it would be a fit and graceful thing for the King's Government to place a frigate at his disposal for his voyage to the Mediterranean. Sir James replied, honourably for all concerned, that it afforded himself, and his Royal Master, the sincerest satisfaction to comply with this hint; and that whenever Sir Walter found it convenient to come southwards, a vessel should be prepared for his reception. Nothing could be handsomer than the way in which all this matter was arranged, and Scott, deeply gratified, exclaimed

that things were yet in the hands of gentlemen; but that he feared they had been undermining the state of society which required such persons as themselves to be at the head.

He had no wish, however, to leave Abbotsford until the approach of winter; and having dismissed his Tales, seemed to say to himself that he would enjoy his dear valley for the intervening weeks, draw friends about him, revisit all the familiar scenes in his neighbourhood once more; and if he were never to come back, store himself with the most agreeable recollections in his power, and so conduct himself as to bequeath to us who surrounded him a last stock of gentle impressions. He continued to work a little at his notes and prefaces, the *Reliquiæ* of Oldbuck, and the *Sylva Abbotsfordiensis*; but did not fatigue himself; and when once all plans were settled, and all cares in so far as possible set aside, his health and spirits certainly rallied most wonderfully. He had settled that my wife and I should dine at Abbotsford, and he and Anne at Chiefswood, day about; and this rule was seldom departed from. Both at home and in the cottage he was willing to have a few guests, so they were not strangers. Mr. James (the author of *Richelieu*) and his lady, who this season lived at Maxpoffle, and Mr. Archdeacon Williams, who was spending his vacation at Melrose, were welcome additions—and frequently so—to his accustomed circle of the Scotts of Harden, the Pringles of Whytbank and Clifton, the Russells of Ashestiel, the Brewsters, and the Fergussons. Sir Walter observed the prescribed diet, on the whole, pretty accurately; and seemed, when in the midst of his family and friends, always tranquil—sometimes cheerful. On one or two occasions he was even gay: particularly, I think, when the weather was so fine as to tempt us to dine in the marble-hall at Abbotsford, or at an early hour under the trees at Chiefswood, in the old fashion of Rose's *Fête de Village*.

Very near the end there came some unexpected things to cast a sunset brilliancy over Abbotsford. His son, the Major, arrived with tidings that he had obtained leave of absence from his regiment, and should be in readiness to sail with his father. This was a mighty

relief to us all, on Miss Scott's account as well as his, for my occupations did not permit me to think of going with him, and there was no other near connexion at hand. But Sir Walter was delighted—indeed, dearly as he loved all his children, he had a pride in the Major that stood quite by itself, and the hearty approbation which looked through his eyes whenever turned on him, sparkled brighter than ever as his own physical strength decayed. Young Walter had on this occasion sent down a horse or two to winter at Abbotsford. One was a remarkably tall and handsome animal, jet black all over, and when the Major appeared on it one morning, equipped for a little sport with the greyhounds, Sir Walter insisted on being put upon Douce Davy, and conducted as far as the Cauldshields Loch to see the day's work begun. He halted on the high bank to the north of the lake, and I remained to hold his bridle, in case of any frisk on the part of the Covenanter at the "tumult great of dogs and men." We witnessed a very pretty chase or two on the opposite side of the water—but his eye followed always the tall black steed and his rider. The father might well assure Lady Davy, that "a handsomer fellow never put foot into stirrup." But when he took a very high wall of loose stones, at which everybody else *craned*, as easily and elegantly as if it had been a puddle in his stride, the old man's rapture was extreme. "Look at him!" said he—"only look at him! Now, isn't he a fine fellow?"—This was the last time, I believe, that Sir Walter mounted on horseback.

On the 20th Mrs. Lockhart set out for London to prepare for her father's reception there, and for the outfit of his voyage; and on the following day Mr. Wordsworth and his daughter arrived from Westmoreland to take farewell of him. This was a very fortunate circumstance: nothing could have gratified Sir Walter more, or sustained him better, if he needed any support from without. On the 22nd—all his arrangements being completed, and Laidlaw having received a paper of instructions, the last article of which repeats the caution to be "very careful of the dogs"—these two great poets, who had through life loved each other well, and, in spite of very different theories as to art, appreciated each

other's genius more justly than inferior spirits ever did either of them, spent the morning together in a visit to Newark. Hence the last of the three poems by which Wordsworth has connected his name to all time with the most romantic of Scottish streams. But I need not transcribe a piece so well known as the "Yarrow Revisited."

Early on the 23rd of September [1831], Sir Walter left Abbotsford, attended by his daughter Anne, and myself, and we reached London by easy stages on the 28th, having spent one day at Rokeby. I have nothing to mention of this journey except that, notwithstanding all his infirmities, he would not pass any object to which he had ever attached special interest, without getting out of the carriage to revisit it.

October 23.—After breakfast, Sir Walter, accompanied by his son and both his daughters, set off for Portsmouth; and Captain Basil Hall had the kindness to precede them by an early coach, and prepare everything for their reception at the hotel.

The Barham could not sail for a week. During this interval, Sir Walter scarcely stirred from his hotel, being unwilling to display his infirmities to the crowd of gazers who besieged him whenever he appeared. He received, however, deputations of the literary and scientific societies of the town, and all other visitors, with his usual ease and courtesy: and he might well be gratified with the extraordinary marks of deference paid him by the official persons who could in any way contribute to his ease and comfort. The first Lord of the Admiralty, Sir James Graham, and the Secretary, Sir John Barrow, both appeared in person, to ascertain that nothing had been neglected for his accommodation on board the frigate. The Admiral, Sir Thomas Foley, placed his barge at his disposal; the Governor, Sir Colin Campbell, and all the chief officers, naval and military, seemed to strive with each other in attention to him and his companions. In Captain Hall's *Third Series of Fragments of Voyages and Travels* (vol. iii. p. 280), some interesting details have long since been made public. But it may be sufficient to say here, that had Captain Pigot and his gallant shipmates been appointed to convey a Prince

of the Blood and his suite, more generous, anxious, and delicate exertions could not have been made, either in altering the interior of the vessel, so as to meet the wants of the passengers, or afterwards, throughout the voyage, in rendering it easy, comfortable, and as far as might be, interesting and amusing.

On the morning of the 29th, the wind at last changed, and the Barham got under weigh.

After a few days, when they had passed the Bay of Biscay, Sir Walter ceased to be annoyed with seasickness, and sat most of his time on deck, enjoying apparently the air, the scenery, and above all the ship itself, the beautiful discipline practised in all things, and the martial exercises of the men. In Captain Pigot, Lieutenant Walker, the physician Dr. Liddell, and I believe in many others of the officers, he had highly intelligent, as well as polished companions. The course was often altered, for the express purpose of giving him a glimpse of some famous place; and it was only the temptation of a singularly propitious breeze that prevented a halt at Algiers.

On the 17th of December, the Barham reached Naples, and Sir Walter found his son Charles ready to receive him. The quarantine was cut short by the courtesy of the King of Naples, and the travellers established themselves in an apartment of the Palazzo Caramanico.

Here again the British Minister, Mr. Hill (now Lord Berwick), and the English nobility and gentry then residing in Naples, did whatever kindness and respect could suggest for Sir Walter; nor were the natives, and their visitants from foreign countries, less attentive.

While at Naples, Sir Walter wrote frequently to his daughter Sophia, Mr. Cadell, Mr. Laidlaw, and myself. Some of these letters were of a very melancholy cast; for the dream about his debts being all settled was occasionally broken; and probably it was when that left him that he worked hardest at his Novels—though the habit of working had become so fixed that I may be wrong in this conjecture. In general, however, these last letters tell the same story of delusive hopes both as to health and wealth, of satisfaction in the resumption of his pen, of eagerness to be once more at Abbotsford, and

of affectionate anxiety about the friends he was there to rejoin. Every one of those to Laidlaw has something about the poor people and the dogs. One to myself conveyed his desire that he might be set down for "something as handsome as I liked" in a subscription then thought of for the Ettrick Shepherd; who that spring visited London, and was in no respect improved by his visit. Another to my wife bade her purchase a grand pianoforte which he wished to present to Miss Cadell, his bookseller's daughter. The same generous spirit was shown in many other communications.

XXII

RETURN TO ENGLAND. ILLNESS IN LONDON
JOURNEY TO ABBOTSFORD. DEATH

1832

THE last jotting of Sir Walter's Diary—perhaps the last specimen of his handwriting—records his starting from Naples on the 16th of April. After the 11th of May the story can hardly be told too briefly.

The irritation of impatience, which had for a moment been suspended by the aspect and society of Rome, returned the moment he found himself on the road, and seemed to increase hourly. His companions could with difficulty prevail on him to see even the falls of Terni, or the church of Santa Croce at Florence. On the 17th, a cold and dreary day, they passed the Apennines, and dined on the top of the mountains. The snow and the pines recalled Scotland, and he expressed pleasure at the sight of them. That night they reached Bologna, but he would see none of the interesting objects there;—and next day, hurrying in like manner through Ferrara, he proceeded as far as Monselice. On the 19th he arrived at Venice; and he remained there till the 23rd; but showed no curiosity about anything except the Bridge of Sighs and the adjoining dungeons—down into which he

would scramble, though the exertion was exceedingly painful to him. On the other historical features of that place—one so sure in other days to have inexhaustible attractions for him—he would not even look; and it was the same with all that he came within reach of—even with the fondly anticipated chapel at Inspruck—as they proceeded through the Tyrol, and so onwards, by Munich, Ulm, and Heidelberg, to Frankfort. Here (June 5) he entered a bookseller's shop; and the people seeing an English party, brought out among the first things, a lithographed print of Abbotsford. He said—"I know that already, sir," and hastened back to the inn without being recognised. Though in some parts of the journey they had very severe weather, he repeatedly wished to travel all the night as well as all the day; and the symptoms of an approaching fit were so obvious, that he was more than once bled, ere they reached Mayence, by the hand of his affectionate domestic.

At this town they embarked, on the 8th June, in the Rhine steam-boat; and while they descended the famous river through its most picturesque region, he seemed to enjoy, though he said nothing, the perhaps unrivalled scenery it presented to him. His eye was fixed on the successive crags and castles, and ruined monasteries, each of which had been celebrated in some German ballad familiar to his ear, and all of them blended in the immortal panorama of Childe Harold. But so soon as they had passed Cologne, and nothing but flat shores, and here and there a grove of poplars and a village spire were offered to the vision, the weight of misery sunk down again upon him. It was near Nimeguen, on the evening of the 9th, that he sustained another serious attack of apoplexy, combined with paralysis. Nicolson's lancet restored, after the lapse of some minutes, the signs of animation; but this was the crowning blow. Next day he insisted on resuming his journey, and on the 11th was lifted into an English steam-boat at Rotterdam.

He reached London about six o'clock on the evening of Wednesday the 13th of June. Owing to the unexpected rapidity of the journey, his eldest daughter had had no notice when to expect him; and fearful of finding

her either out of town, or unprepared to receive him and his attendants under her roof, Charles Scott drove to the St. James's hotel in Jermyn Street, and established his quarters there before he set out in quest of his sister and myself. When we reached the hotel, he recognised us with many marks of tenderness, but signified that he was totally exhausted; so no attempt was made to remove him further, and he was put to bed immediately. Dr. Fergusson saw him the same night, and next day Sir Henry Halford and Dr. Holland saw him also; and during the next three weeks the two latter visited him daily, while Fergusson was scarcely absent from his pillow. The Major was soon on the spot. To his children, all assembled once more about him, he repeatedly gave his blessing in a very solemn manner, as if expecting immediate death; but he was never in a condition for conversation, and sunk either into sleep or delirious stupor upon the slightest effort.

At length his constant yearning to return to Abbotsford induced his physicians to consent to his removal; and the moment this was notified to him, it seemed to infuse new vigour into his frame. It was on a calm, clear afternoon of the 7th July, that every preparation was made for his embarkation on board the steam-boat. He was placed on a chair by his faithful servant Nicolson, half-dressed, and loosely wrapt in a quilted dressing-gown. He requested Lockhart and myself to wheel him towards the light of the open window, and we both remarked the vigorous lustre of his eye. He sat there silently gazing on space for more than half an hour, apparently wholly occupied with his own thoughts, and having no distinct perception of where he was, or how he came there. He suffered himself to be lifted into his carriage, which was surrounded by a crowd, among whom were many gentlemen on horseback, who had loitered about to gaze on the scene.

His children were deeply affected, and Mrs. Lockhart trembled from head to foot, and wept bitterly. Thus surrounded by those nearest to him, he alone was unconscious of the cause or the depth of their grief, and while yet alive seemed to be carried to his grave.

On this his last journey, Sir Walter was attended by his two daughters, Mr. Cadell, and myself—and also by Dr. Thomas Watson, who (it being impossible for Dr. Fergusson to leave town at that moment) kindly undertook to see him safe at Abbotsford. We embarked in the James Watt steam-boat, the master of which (Captain John Jamieson), as well as the agent of the proprietors, made every arrangement in their power for the convenience of the invalid. The Captain gave up for Sir Walter's use his own private cabin, which was a separate erection—a sort of cottage—on the deck; and he seemed unconscious, after laid in bed there, that any new removal had occurred. On arriving at Newhaven, late on the 9th, we found careful preparations made for his landing by the manager of the Shipping Company (Mr. Hamilton;—and Sir Walter, prostrate in his carriage, was slung on shore, and conveyed from thence to Douglas's hotel, in St. Andrew's Square, in the same complete apparent unconsciousness. Mrs. Douglas had in former days been the Duke of Buccleuch's housekeeper at Bowhill, and she and her husband had also made the most suitable provision. At a very early hour on the morning of Wednesday the 11th, we again placed him in his carriage, and he lay in the same torpid state during the first two stages on the road to Tweed-side. But as we descended the vale of the Gala he began to gaze about him, and by degrees it was obvious that he was recognising the features of that familiar landscape. Presently he murmured a name or two—"Gala Water, surely—Buckholm—Torwoodlee." As we rounded the hill at Ladhope, and the outline of the Eildons burst on him, he became greatly excited, and when turning himself on the couch his eye caught at length his own towers, at the distance of a mile, he sprang up with a cry of delight. The river being in flood, we had to go round a few miles by Melrose bridge; and during the time this occupied, his woods and house being within prospect, it required occasionally both Dr. Watson's strength and mine, in addition to Nicolson's, to keep him in the carriage. After passing the bridge, the road for a couple of miles loses sight of Abbotsford, and he relapsed into his stupor; but on gaining the bank

immediately above it, his excitement became again ungovernable.

Mr. Laidlaw was waiting at the porch, and assisted us in lifting him into the dining-room, where his bed had been prepared. He sat bewildered for a few moments, and then resting his eye on Laidlaw, said—"Ha! Willie Laidlaw! O man, how often have I thought of you!" By this time his dogs had assembled about his chair—they began to fawn upon him and lick his hands, and he alternately sobbed and smiled over them, until sleep oppressed him.

Dr. Watson having consulted on all things with Mr. Clarkson and his father, resigned the patient to them, and returned to London. None of them could have any hope, but that of soothing irritation. Recovery was no longer to be thought of: but there might be *Euthanasia*.

And yet something like a ray of hope did break in upon us next morning. Sir Walter awoke perfectly conscious where he was, and expressed an ardent wish to be carried out into his garden. We procured a Bath chair from Huntly Burn, and Laidlaw and I wheeled him out before his door, and up and down for some time on the turf, and among the rose-beds then in full bloom. The grandchildren admired the new vehicle, and would be helping in their way to push it about. He sat in silence, smiling placidly on them and the dogs their companions, and now and then admiring the house, the screen of the garden, and the flowers and trees. By and by he conversed a little, very composedly, with us—said he was happy to be at home—that he felt better than he had ever done since he left it, and would perhaps disappoint the doctors after all.

He then desired to be wheeled through his rooms, and we moved him leisurely for an hour or more up and down the hall and the great library:—"I have seen much," he kept saying, "but nothing like my ain house—give me one turn more!" He was gentle as an infant, and allowed himself to be put to bed again, the moment we told him that we thought he had had enough for one day.

Next morning he was still better. After again enjoying the Bath chair for perhaps a couple of hours out of

doors, he desired to be drawn into the library, and placed by the central window, that he might look down upon the Tweed. Here he expressed a wish that I should read to him, and when I asked from what book, he said—"Need you ask? There is but one." I chose the 14th chapter of St. John's Gospel; he listened with mild devotion, and said when I had done—"Well, this is a great comfort—I have followed you distinctly, and I feel as if I were yet to be myself again." In this placid frame he was again put to bed, and had many hours of soft slumber.

On the morning of Sunday the 15th, he was again taken out into the little *pleasaunce*, and got as far as his favourite terrace-walk between the garden and the river, from which he seemed to survey the valley and the hills with much satisfaction. On re-entering the house, he desired me to read to him from the New Testament, and after that he again called for a little of Crabbe; but whatever I selected from that poet seemed to be listened to as if it made part of some new volume published while he was in Italy. He attended with this sense of novelty even to the tale of Phœbe Dawson, which not many months before he could have repeated every line of, and which I chose for one of these readings, because, as is known to every one, it had formed the last solace of Mr. Fox's deathbed. On the contrary, his recollection of whatever I read from the Bible appeared to be lively; and in the afternoon, when we made his grandson, a child of six years, repeat some of Dr. Watts' hymns by his chair, he seemed also to remember them perfectly. That evening he heard the Church service, and when I was about to close the book, said—"Why do you omit the visitation for the sick?"—which I added accordingly.

On Monday he remained in bed, and seemed extremely feeble; but after breakfast on Tuesday the 17th he appeared revived somewhat, and was again wheeled about on the turf. Presently he fell asleep in his chair, and after dozing for perhaps half an hour, started awake, and shaking the plaids we had put about him from off his shoulders, said—"This is sad idleness. I shall forget what I have been thinking of, if I don't set

it down now. Take me into my own room, and fetch the keys of my desk." He repeated this so earnestly, that we could not refuse; his daughters went into his study, opened his writing-desk, and laid paper and pens in the usual order, and I then moved him through the hall and into the spot where he had always been accustomed to work. When the chair was placed at the desk, and he found himself in the old position, he smiled and thanked us, and said—"Now give me my pen, and leave me for a little to myself." Sophia put the pen into his hand, and he endeavoured to close his fingers upon it, but they refused their office—it dropped on the paper. He sank back among his pillows, silent tears rolling down his cheeks; but composing himself by and by, motioned to me to wheel him out of doors again. Laidlaw met us at the porch, and took his turn of the chair. Sir Walter, after a little while, again dropt into slumber. When he was awaking, Laidlaw said to me—"Sir Walter has had a little repose."—"No, Willie," said he—"no repose for Sir Walter but in the grave." The tears again rushed from his eyes. "Friends," said he, "don't let me expose myself—get me to bed—that's the only place."

After this he declined daily, but still there was great strength to be wasted, and the process was long. He seemed, however, to suffer no bodily pain,—and his mind, though hopelessly obscured, appeared, when there was any symptom of consciousness, to be dwelling, with rare exceptions, on serious and solemn things; the accent of the voice grave, sometimes awful, but never querulous, and very seldom indicative of any angry or resentful thoughts.

As I was dressing on the morning of Monday the 17th of September, Nicolson came into my room, and told me that his master had awoke in a state of composure and consciousness, and wished to see me immediately. I found him entirely himself, though in the last extreme of feebleness. His eye was clear and calm—every trace of the wild fire of delirium extinguished. "Lockhart," he said, "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here."—He paused, and I said—

"Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?"—"No," said he, "don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night—God bless you all."—With this he sunk into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness, except for an instant on the arrival of his sons.—They, on learning that the scene was about to close, obtained anew leave of absence from their posts, and both reached Abbotsford on the 19th. About half-past one p.m., on the 21st of September, Sir Walter breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day—so warm, that every window was wide open—and so perfectly still, that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes.

Almost every newspaper that announced this event in Scotland, and many in England, had the signs of mourning usual on the demise of a king. With hardly an exception, the voice was that of universal, unmixed grief and veneration.

His funeral was conducted in an unostentatious manner, but the attendance was very great. Few of his old friends then in Scotland were absent,—and many, both friends and strangers, came from a great distance. His old domestics and foresters made it their petition that no hireling hand might assist in carrying his remains. They themselves bore the coffin to the hearse, and from the hearse to the grave. The pall-bearers were his sons, his son-in-law, and his little grandson; his cousins, Charles Scott of Nesbitt, James Scott of Jedburgh (sons to his uncle Thomas), William Scott of Raeburn, Robert Rutherford, Clerk to the Signet, Colonel (now Sir James) Russell of Ashestiel, William Keith (brother to Sir Alexander Keith of Ravelstone), and the chief of his family, Hugh Scott of Harden, now Lord Polwarth.

When the company were assembled, according to the usual Scotch fashion, prayers were offered up by the Very Reverend Dr. Baird, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and by the Reverend Dr. David Dickson, Minister of St. Cuthbert's, who both expatiated in a

very striking manner on the virtuous example of the deceased.

The court-yard and all the precincts of Abbotsford were crowded with uncovered spectators as the procession was arranged; and as it advanced through Darnick and Melrose, and the adjacent villages, the whole population appeared at their doors in like manner—almost all in black. The train of carriages extended, I understand, over more than a mile; the Yeomanry followed in great numbers on horseback; and it was late in the day ere we reached Dryburgh. Some accident, it was observed, had caused the hearse to halt for several minutes on the summit of the hill at Bemerside—exactly where a prospect of remarkable richness opens, and where Sir Walter had always been accustomed to rein up his horse. The day was dark and lowering, and the wind high.

The wide enclosure at the Abbey of Dryburgh was thronged with old and young; and when the coffin was taken from the hearse, and again laid on the shoulders of the afflicted serving-men, one deep sob burst from a thousand lips. Mr. Archdeacon Williams read the Burial Service of the Church of England; and thus, about half-past five o'clock in the evening of Wednesday the 26th September, 1832, the remains of SIR WALTER SCOTT were laid by the side of his wife in the sepulchre of his ancestors—*"in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."*

NOTES

- p. 3. *Hirsel*, a flock of sheep.
- p. 3. *Writer to the Signet*, a class of legal practitioners in Edinburgh, who practised as attorneys before the Court of Session.
- p. 3. *Uncle Toby*, a character in Sterne's "*Tristram Shandy*."
- p. 4. *Wynd*, alley or lane.
- p. 4. *Topical remedies*, remedies applied to a particular part of the body.
- p. 6. *Wells of Bladud*, Bladud, the father of King Lear, is said by tradition to have built the city of Bath.
- p. 6. *Non sine diis animosus infans*, a child living by the grace of God.
- p. 6. *Automathes*, a work of fiction published by John Kirkby in 1745, the full title of which is "The capacity and extent of the Human Understanding exemplified in the extraordinary case of Automathes, a young nobleman who was accidentally left in his infancy upon a desolate island, and continued nineteen years in that solitary state separate from all human society." (*Automathes*, from Gr. *autos*, self; and *mathein*, from *manthano*, to learn.)
- p. 6. *Ramsay's "Tea-table Miscellany,"* a collection of poems published in 1724 by the Scottish poet, Allan Ramsay.
- p. 7. *John Home*, author of "*Douglas*." John Home was a Scotch minister who published his tragedy, "*Douglas*," in 1757.
- p. 8. *Gesner's "Death of Abel,"* an heroic poem written by Salomon Gesner (1730-1788), a German pastoral poet.
- p. 8. *Rowe's Letters*. Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe (1674-1737) published a volume of poems under the name of "*Philomela*" in 1696, which were enthusiastically praised by Dr. Johnson. The most popular of her writings were in the form of Letters; e.g. "*Letters Moral and Entertaining*," published 1729-33.
- p. 8. *Allan Ramsay's "Evergreen,"* a collection of poems similar to the "*Tea-table Miscellany*," and published in the same year.
- p. 9. *Lucky*, a Scotch term, meaning an old woman.

p. 10. Yards, playground.

p. 11. Dr. Blacklock, a blind poet who kept a boarding school in Edinburgh.

p. 11. Ossian. James Macpherson published in 1760 his "Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Gaelic or Erse Language." These he ascribed to Ossian, the son of Fingal, an ancient chief of Scotland. The poems were afterwards declared by critics to be forgeries, and their authorship is still a matter of doubt. They had great influence in reviving interest in romantic poetry.

p. 12. Bishop Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry." A collection of old ballads, with some modern imitations, published 1765.

p. 12. Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered," an epic poem by Torquato Tasso, 1575. It was translated from the Italian into English verse by Hoole in 1762.

p. 13. Garden I have mentioned, the garden at Kelso belonging to Scott's aunt, Miss Janet Scott, with whom he spent six months between the time of his leaving Edinburgh, and that of his entering college.

p. 13. Richardson, Samuel (1689-1761), author of the novels "Pamela," "Clarissa Harlowe," and "Sir Charles Grandison."

p. 13. Mackenzie, Henry (1745-1831), author of "The Man of Feeling," "Julia de Roubigné," etc.

p. 13. Fielding, Henry (1707-1754), author of "Tom Jones," "Amelia," etc.

p. 13. Smollett, Tobias (1721-1771), author of "Peregrine Pickle," "Humphrey Clinker," etc.

p. 14. Humanity, Latin and Latin Literature.

p. 15. "A clerk," etc., from Pope's Prologue to the Satires, l. 17.

p. 15. Menus plaisirs, harmless pleasures.

p. 15. Folio pages, the folio consisted of seventy-two words. Lockhart says, "When Walter had finished, as he tells us he occasionally did, 120 pages within twenty-four hours, his fee would amount to thirty shillings."

p. 15. Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy tribe, the fine lady and gentlemen characters common in the second rate novels of the day; e.g. "The History of Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy" (1753), by Mrs. Haywood.

p. 16. Burney, Fanny (1752-1840), who wrote "Evelina," "Cecilia," and "Camilla," novels of a domestic character.

p. 17. "Ingenio non subeunda meo," not for my spirit to undergo; from Milton's "Elegia Prima," l. 16.

p. 18. Heineccius's Analysis of the Institutes and Pandects, a law treatise written by Johann Heineccius (1681-1741), a famous German jurist.

p. 18. **Erskine's Institutes of the Law of Scotland**, one of the most famous of the legal works of John Erskine (1695-1768), professor of Scots law at Edinburgh.

p. 19. **Tony Lumpkin**, a character in Goldsmith's play "She Stoops to Conquer."

p. 21. **The English Historical Library**, published between 1696 and 1724, founded on the wonderful collection of MSS. and official documents accumulated by the Bishop of Carlisle.

p. 24. **His absent relation's woods**. Ashestiel belonged to Scott's cousin, who was then absent in India.

p. 25. **Position originally offered to James Hogg**, that of grieve or bailiff at Ashestiel.

p. 25. **Already as we have seen, etc.** In 1802, when John Ballantyne first set up his press at Edinburgh, Scott had assisted him with the "liberal loan" here referred to.

p. 25. **Broadmeadows**, an estate on the north bank of the Yarrow which Scott had desired to buy.

p. 27. **The first volumes of his Dryden**. Scott and Ballantyne had planned to issue a complete edition of the English poets, the series to begin with an edition of the works of Dryden, and life of the poet, prepared by Scott.

p. 30. **Cyropædia**, an account written by Xenophon of the life of Cyrus, king of Persia, in which he draws a picture of what a wise and just prince ought to be. We are told that the ancient Persians taught their boys three things—to ride a horse, to shoot straight, and to tell the truth.

p. 32. **Two elder sisters**. "Lay of the Last Minstrel" and "Marmion."

p. 32. **This Memoir, i.e.** Lockhart's "Life of Scott."

p. 33. **Sit mihi sedes utinam senectæ**. May it be the retreat of my old age.

p. 33. **Cessford's slaughter**, at the battle of Melrose, 1526, where Kerr of Cessford was killed by Eliot of Buccleuch.

p. 34. **Turnagain**, the spot where Cessford was killed, and the pursuit of the victorious clan ended.

p. 34. **Redding-kame**, a large-toothed comb; from the Swedish verb *reda*, to prepare, to put in order.

p. 34. **Kail-yard**, cabbage garden.

p. 34. **Clarty**, muddy.

p. 35. **The Catrail**. "From Selkirkshire to Cumberland, we have a ditch and bulwark of great strength called the Catrail, running north and south, and obviously calculated to defend the western side of the island against the inhabitants of the eastern half." (Sir Walter Scott.)

p. 37. *Facturis nepotibus umbram*, a shade my grandchildren will enjoy.

p. 37. *Tityrus and Menalcas*. "Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi." "Tityrus, thou lying beneath the shade of a wide spreading beech tree . . ." is the opening of Vergil's First Eclogue.

p. 38. *Old Man's Salary*, a reference to the salary as Clerk of Session now received by Scott (see pp. 33 and 35).

p. 41. *Knife-Grinder*, a reference to Canning's poem, "The Needy Knife-Grinder," which appeared in the "Anti-Jacobin," a famous Tory periodical (1798-1821). The poem parodied the style of Southey.

p. 48. *Diomed in the Iliad*. Diomed, when about to fight Glaucus, recognises ties of hospitality with him, and they part in friendliness, exchanging gifts. Diomed receives a gift of golden armour in exchange for brazen armour. ("Iliad" Bk. 6.)

p. 48. *Expende*—quot libras, etc. Weigh (Hannibal). How many pounds will you find in that greatest of leaders? . . . Death alone tells the secret how small are men's anatomies. (Juvenal, 10th Satire.)

p. 49. *Gentlewoman of Babylon*, the Romish Church.

p. 53. *Je crois qu'ils sont mêlés*. I believe that they are in confusion.

p. 54. *Charles Mathews and Daniel Terry*, famous actors of the day and friends of Scott.

p. 55. *Beaumont and Fletcher*, two dramatists of the Elizabethan age, who collaborated in the writing of several plays.

p. 56. *William Laidlaw*. Scott had made the acquaintance of Laidlaw in 1801, during one of his excursions in the Vale of Yarrow in search of old ballads. The Laidlaws lived at a remote farm on the Douglas burn. Scott was delighted with William Laidlaw, then a very young man, and the acquaintance soon grew into the closest intimacy.

p. 56. *Knickerbocker*, a name assumed by Washington Irving, the author of "The History of New York."

p. 63. *Edinburgh Annual Register*, a publication of the Ballantyne Press, first issued in 1810. It contained articles by Scott, Southey, and other well-known writers on current historical, literary, and scientific matters.

p. 64. *Juniores ad labores*. The younger are suited for work.

p. 64. *Revisit Abbotsford, etc*. Lockhart's first visit to Abbotsford had been paid in October, 1818. Early in 1819 Scott had had an alarming recurrence of the painful illness which had first attacked him in 1817. He says of himself in a letter to the poet Southey, April 1819, "I have been seized with one or two successive crises of my cruel malady lasting in the utmost anguish from eight to ten hours. If I had not the strength of a team of horses, I could never have fought through it."

p. 65. **When I am in woollen.** After I am dead. In the reign of Charles II. an Act, passed for the purpose of assisting the woollen trade, provided that shrouds should be made of wool.

p. 68. **Desuetude, disuse.**

p. 68. **Jeremy Taylor** (1613-1667), a famous Royalist divine, author of "Holy Living" and "Holy Dying."

p. 68. **Peter Mathieson**, Scott's coachman, brother-in-law to Tom Purdie.

p. 69. **Grieve**, overseer or bailiff.

p. 69. **Black-fisher**, one who fishes at night illegally : a poacher.

p. 70. **Bibliopoles**, booksellers.

p. 70. **Aits and birks**, oats and birches.

p. 70. **Great Unknown**, the name given to the anonymous author of the Waverley novels.

p. 71. **Quaigh**, drinking-cup.

p. 72. **William Allan** (1782-1850), a Scottish historical painter, President of the Royal Scottish Academy, 1838.

p. 73. **Wilkie**, Sir David (1785-1841), a celebrated painter whose pictures mainly depicted humorous scenes from humble life.

p. 73. **Edwin Landseer**, Sir Edwin (1802-1873), the great painter of animals.

p. 73. **Shelty**, a Highland pony.

p. 73. **Hinves**. David Hinves, a bookbinder and Methodist preacher, was taken into the service of Mr. Rose, with whom he lived for forty years. He was probably the original of David Gelatly in Scott's "Waverley."

p. 73. **The Man of Feeling**. Henry Mackenzie is so called from the title of his most famous novel.

p. 75. **Dominie Thompson**, son of the minister of Melrose, and tutor in Scott's household since 1812. He was "tall, vigorous, athletic, a dauntless horseman and expert at the singletick," but had lost one leg by an accident in childhood. Scott often said, "In the Dominie, like myself, accident has spoiled a capital life-guardsmen."

p. 76. **Luculent**, clear, lucid.

p. 76. **View-holla**, the cry of the huntsman on seeing the fox break cover.

p. 76. **Cockyleekie**, a famous Scotch dish, consisting of soup made from a cock boiled with leeks.

p. 76. **Camacho's wedding**, the story of the great wedding feast given by Camacho is told in the 59th chapter of "Don Quixote."

p. 76. **Tryste**, market.

p. 76. **Ettrick Shepherd**, James Hogg, the shepherd-poet, who lived in the vale of Ettrick.

p. 76. **Dandie Dinmont**, a character in Scott's "Guy Mannering."

p. 76. **Mountain dew**, a name given to Scotch whisky, in reference to the illicit stills which in former times were to be found concealed among the mountains.

p. 76. **Towmont**, twelvemonth.

p. 77. **James Hogg**, the poet, known as "The Ettrick Shepherd," at this time living on the estate of the Duke of Buccleuch.

p. 78. **Warstle**, wrestle, here meaning "to pray earnestly."

p. 79. **Crabbe** (1754-1832) author of "The Village," "The Parish Register," "The Borough," etc.

p. 81. **Miss Edgeworth** (1767-1849) wrote novels dealing with Irish life, the chief of which are "Castle Rackrent," "The Absentee," "Belinda," "Helen"; also a number of stories for children.

p. 81. **Thomas the Rhymer**. Thomas of Erceldoun, an ancient Scottish bard, reputed a magician; believed to have lived in the thirteenth century. "He is alleged still to be living in the land of Faery, and is expected to return at some great convulsion of society in which he is to act a distinguished part." ("Castle Dangerous," Scott.)

p. 82. **Mr. Train**. "Whatever portable object of antiquarian curiosity met his eye, this good man secured and treasured up with the same destination; and if ever a catalogue of the museum at Abbotsford shall appear, no single contributor, most assuredly, will fill so large a space in it as Mr. Train." (Lockhart.)

p. 83. **Was done to death**, etc. "Lord of the Isles," Canto II., Stanza XXVI.

p. 89. **Ploy**, an abbreviation of "employ," here meaning "frolic."

p. 92. **Sketch of the French Revolution**. In the previous May Scott had undertaken to write a "Life of Napoleon Buonaparte" for Constable's projected series of cheap volumes subsequently issued under the name of "Constable's Miscellany." The sketch of the French Revolution was designed as an Introduction to this work.

p. 93. **Pindar** (B.C. 518-442) the Theban lyric poet.

p. 95. **Locus cui nomen est Pallas**, place whose name is Pallas. From Johnson's epitaph on Goldsmith's monument in Westminster Abbey.

p. 95. "Sweet Auburn," etc., from "The Deserted Village."

p. 97. **Peri Banou's tent**, the tent given to Prince Ahmed by Peri Banou, which would cover a whole army, and yet fold up into the palm of the hand. ("Arabian Nights.")

p. 98. **Mauvaise honte**, bashfulness.

p. 100. **Milesian**. The Milesians were the ancient inhabitants of Ireland, so called from Milesius, a legendary king of Spain, whose sons are said to have conquered Ireland about 1300 B.C.

p. 100. **Peveril**, a nickname given to Scott, and commonly used by his friends. "One morning, soon after 'Peveril' came out, one of our most famous wags . . . namely, Mr. Patrick Robertson . . . observed that tall conical, white head advancing above the crowd towards the fireplace . . . and said, 'Hush, boys, here comes old Peveril—I see *the Peak*.'" (Lockhart.) Mr. Patrick Robertson was a young barrister, and the incident occurred at the Parliament House.

p. 102. **Lord Byron's Ravenna Diary**. The diary kept by Lord Byron during his stay at Ravenna, 1820.

p. 102. "**After times would not willingly let die.**" From Milton's "The Reason of Church Government." "I began thus far to assent, . . . that by labour and intent study . . . joined with a strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to after times as they should not willingly let it die."

p. 103. **Pepys's Diary**. Samuel Pepys was Secretary to the Admiralty during the reign of Charles II. His diary, which was written in cipher, deals with the years 1660-1669. At his death he bequeathed his collection of books to the library of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and the diary lay unnoticed among these until 1819, when it was deciphered by John Smith, afterwards rector of Baldock. A transcript was edited in 1825 by Lord Braybrooke.

p. 105. **Unbekannten Obern**, unknown rulers.

p. 107. **Doggedly**. "A man may always write well when he will set himself *doggedly* to it." (Boswell, Johnson.)

p. 108. **Boaden's "Life of Kemble" and "Kelly's Reminiscences."** Two works reviewed by Scott for the *Quarterly*.

p. 111. **Tom Moore (1779-1852)**, writer of many well-known lyrics, e.g. "The Minstrel Boy," "The Harp that once," etc.

p. 112. **Caribs**, an American-Indian race, formerly inhabiting part of the West Indies, but now nearly extinct.

p. 113. **Accident at the Catrill**. "This (1825) was the last year of many things; among others of Sybil Grey and the Abbotsford Hunt. Towards the close of a hard run on his neighbour Mr. Scott of Gala's ground, he (Scott) adventured to leap the Catrill. . . . He was severely bruised and shattered, and never afterwards recovered the feeling of confidence without which there can be no pleasure in horsemanship. He often talked of this accident with a somewhat superstitious mournfulness." (Lockhart.)

p. 113. **His invalid grandson**, John Hugh Lockhart, eldest son of John Gibson Lockhart and Scott's daughter Sophia.

p. 116. **Jacta est alea**. The die is cast.

p. 116. "**Things must be as they may**," from Shakespeare's "Henry V.," Act II., Scene I.

p. 118. **Amid the strings, etc.**, "Lay of the Last Minstrel," Introduction to Canto I.

p. 122. *Reliquiæ of Oldbuck*, a catalogue of the literary and antiquarian rarities of the Abbotsford Museum, which Scott began to compile, but never finished. The name "Oldbuck" is taken from the chief character of Scott's novel, "The Antiquary."

p. 122. *Sylva Abbotsfordiensis*, an account of the plantations of Abbotsford, begun by Scott, but never completed.

p. 122. *Phoebe Dawson*, the heroine of one of the tales in verse or Crabbe's "Parish Register."

p. 127. *His affectionate domestic*, James Nicolson, who had been brought up from boyhood in Scott's household, and who had been instructed by the surgeon, Mr. James Clarkson, in the use of the lancet. There was no resident surgeon within three miles of Abbotsford, and in case of Sir Walter being seized with sudden apoplectic attack, prompt bleeding was necessary.

p. 128. *At length, . . . to his grave*. This extract is from the memorandum of Dr. Fergusson.

p. 130. *Euthanasia*, an easy, painless death.

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The standard life of Scott is, of course, that by Lockhart. The cheapest edition is published by Messrs. A. & C. Black (3s. 6d.). Messrs. Macmillan publish an edition, in the Library of English Classics, edited by Mr. A. W. Pollard (5 vols. at 3s. 6d. nett each).

There is a short life of Scott, by Mr. R. H. Hutton, in the English Men of Letters Series (2s. nett, 1s. 6d., and 1s., the last in paper covers).

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